

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Appley Bridge All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Finch Lane, Appley Bridge, Wigan WN6 9DT

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Lancashire
Dates of inspection	7 th December 2017
Dates of last inspection	March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 119497
Headteacher	Janet Dunn
Inspector's name and number	Helen Sage 909

School context

This smaller than average school is situated at one end of the village and draws pupils from a wide area. Most pupils are White British and from Christian family backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is below the national average. The percentage with some sort of special educational need or disability (SEND) is well below the national average. There is little ethnic diversity.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Appley Bridge All Saints as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The enthusiastic, longstanding and purposeful leadership of the headteacher inspires all stakeholders to live out and promote the school's Christian distinctiveness
- Leaders are very thorough and accurate in their self-evaluation of the school as a church school which effectively supports its improvement
- There is an excellent relationship with the parish church which is mutually beneficial and significantly strengthens knowledge and understanding of the Anglican tradition
- Times of reflection and prayer are highly valued by pupils and staff and are included in all lessons and in worship. As a result, the spiritual development of pupils is a significant strength

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the recently added core Christian values of community, hope, wisdom and dignity and their theological underpinning are embedded in school life by:
 - making sure that all documentation reflects these values and are expressed fully in the school's priorities
 - developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the biblical stories that underpin the revised values so that they make direct links between them and their daily life.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

A shared, strong and respected Christian vision underpins all areas of school life. This is firmly based on the current core Christian values of respect and reverence, hope, joy, forgiveness, perseverance, justice, trust and responsibility, kindness and generosity, self-control, friendship, co-operation and courage. The school has rightly identified the need to further develop their Christian values in line with the Church of England's vision for education. Having reviewed their development plans they have incorporated the Christian values of wisdom, hope, community and dignity into them. However these new values and their theological root have not yet been introduced to all members of the school community. Expressed through inclusive and caring relationships, the present values make a positive contribution to the excellent behaviour seen around the school and ensure learners feel valued and safe. The school's mission statement 'In God's hands we place ourselves and with the strength He gives us, we love, and live and learn together' is evident in all areas of daily school life. Displays throughout the school, of biblical quotations known as 'Watchword' contributes to the explicit Christian ethos. This has a significant impact on the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners. Since the previous denominational inspection links with local faith communities and interfaith week events have developed. These support pupils developing understanding of diversity and the need for respect very well. RE contributes positively to the interfaith week with visits to a variety of places of worship organised. This is then followed up as part of the curriculum. Parents can see the Christian values in action at home, in school and in church and praise the school for its exceptional inclusivity where 'everyone is accepted for who they are'. Attendance is above average and reflects parents' and pupils' enthusiasm as 'staff live out the Christian message. Parents recognise that staff 'go the extra mile' to ensure that individual and family needs are met. Pastoral care is superb and has a positive impact on the well-being of all pupils. In turn this supports and motivates positive attitudes towards learning. A parent commented, 'Day to day teaching is considerate of the cultural make up of the school and finds great balance between the academic content and Christian values'. The pupils talk freely about their pride in their achievements, both individually and together in their caring Christian school. This is seen in strong relationships between staff and pupils and reflected in above average academic standards. RE makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and is evident in wonderful displays of high quality learning throughout. Outdoor play and reflection areas are inspirational and pupils have a keen appreciation of God's creation and a strong understanding of their responsibility to be good stewards of their world. The classrooms interactive spiritual area is highly effective. These areas promote deep thinking, reflection and prayer responses rooted in the Christian ethos. They include Christian values and reference to the Anglican calendar. The school council, 'Fairdos' (the Fairtrade group) and the Christian ethos group link effectively with the governors in supporting the school's Christian distinctiveness. This ensures the school continues to improve and is not complacent.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily collective worship is central and important as the 'heartbeat of the school'. Its impact on the school community is clearly articulated by all stakeholders. Across the two year rolling programme the school focuses on Christian values, church seasons and aspects of Anglican worship. Through worship there is a shared understanding of the school's current Christian values. The planning incorporates the new Christian values for the school, identified in the recent Church of England vision for education, for spring term 2018. Worship is delivered in varied groupings and is ably led by a range of people including school leaders, local clergy, governors and pupils. This variety contributes to wide-ranging engagement and involvement in worship. This increases consistency, shared expectations and provides a rich experience of worship for both adults and pupils. The collective worship leader fulfils her role conscientiously and enthusiastically. Pupils are confident about how much they value worship time as a time to 'talk to God'. Pupils share their feelings in worship time and clearly appreciate their responses being valued. Worship is monitored very effectively by school leaders, governors and pupils who feed back into planning. This leads to further improvement. Leaders have identified next steps for improving how pupils lead and evaluate worship. The development plan accurately identifies focused targets to allow this to be incorporated into school practice. The worship programme supports pupils in developing their understanding of the Bible and Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (the Holy Trinity). This enables pupils to demonstrate a very good, age appropriate knowledge and understanding of this important area of Christian belief. Worship is explicitly Christian and is inclusive of pupils and adults in school. Linked to the school's Christian foundation pupils worship regularly in the local parish church enabling them to develop an understanding of sacramental worship and the significance of Jesus for Christians. A Eucharist service in Key Stage 2 leads to Year 6 experiencing a taught service linked to the RE curriculum. It also supports some pupils who choose to be confirmed. Worship is consistently of a high quality as evidenced by school monitoring and responses from adults and pupils. Year 2 pupils who led the act of worship observed during the inspection, provided fitting opportunities for pupils to reflect and to praise God. Pupils are consistently involved in leading worship and do so confidently. Pupils provide excellent feedback about the variety of

their worship experiences, for example, when worship is led by lay ministers and clergy from the Anglican churches, and about its impact upon their own choices and behaviour. A pupil reflected, 'Going around the school collecting everyone's prayers from the classes, makes you feel special and worship very special'. Christian values and Anglican traditions are reinforced through collective worship; pupils value this time because they can 'talk to God'. Pupils are engaged and respectful in worship through singing, praying and silent reflection. They enjoy stimulating visual images that enhance their appreciation of how the wonder of the natural world that God created can be linked to their lives. In keeping with the church's year and with Anglican practice, different coloured cloths cover the worship table. Pupils understand and talk with clarity about the links between these cloths, the Christian year, and life of Jesus. This enables pupils to explore the core Christian beliefs of God as Holy Trinity. Worship has a high profile both in school and church. A display board in the school hall is used to link worship themes with the parish church. This area shares prayers by pupils and enhances their understanding of Anglican identity well. Similarly, artwork created by the pupils and the resident artist, in reception and around the school, supports the Anglican identity of the school. Worship is well attended and valued by staff, governors, parents and pupils. One governor commented on the 'offering of an opportunity for everyone to worship together.' This is a place where, through worship, every pupil is allowed a unique space to grow spiritually, socially and emotionally.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile as evidenced in both policy and practice. RE is given its due time allocation within the school curriculum. The RE leader is an enthusiastic and supportive specialist teacher. She is knowledgeable and experienced in supporting staff to deliver high quality RE provision across the school. A rich and varied RE curriculum is provided with lesson planning and content based on the Blackburn diocesan syllabus 'Questful RE'. Opportunities are seized to teach RE creatively. These impact positively on pupil learning and on the quality of RE documentation. For example, in the Year 5 lesson observed, teaching was outstanding. Pupils' knowledge of the Nativity story were challenged through analysis of the texts from different Gospel accounts. These were reviewed through the use contemporary social media. A Year 5 pupil spoke at length about how 'God's important news needs to be told truthfully so everyone can easily understand it'. This illustrates that pupils are inspired by RE to develop secure understanding of and about religion. RE provides space for spiritual reflection and growth as key to their own life experiences. There is evidence of activities and support being tailored for pupils with special educational needs and the most able pupils are known and asked more challenging questions. This is reflected in high attainment and strong progress across the board in line with other curriculum areas. As seen in lessons pupils are confident enough to be vulnerable in terms of sharing personal stories, feelings and asking questions. Pupils reflect on how they are totally relaxed in sharing their faith and beliefs. This is as a result of a respectful learning environment. School monitoring by the RE leader is effective. Teachers' rigorous monitoring and assessment practice enables them to respond to the needs of all learners and effective planning. RE reinforces an understanding of the school's Christian values. The school's Christian values have been updated to clearly link with the revised diocesan RE syllabus.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

At every level, the leadership and management of the school is effective and reflects authentic Christian vision and principles. The key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed and evidence of the impact is seen in the data and monitoring. School development action points linked to Christian distinctiveness, are being positively implemented. Close working relationships are effective and demonstrate that the school helps to prepare for future leadership across church schools. At all levels from advert, through interview, to induction and continuing professional development, the school's Christian underpinning is addressed. The school's review of data analysis and regular monitoring and evaluation leads to accurate development planning and pupil challenge. This impacts positively on supporting individual needs and enabling all to flourish. The involvement of class linked governors enables them to know their school well. This effectively enables the support and challenge the governing body provides to the school. Partnerships with the local community and parish, enriches learners' experiences. A governor described the close relationship as 'like a marriage' and another of how 'the relationship never feels over bearing, we always feel valued'. These links are mutually enriching, and are effective in bringing a greater understanding of Anglican life and liturgy. Staff are well supported in their professional development by the RE and collective worship leader and through the use of diocesan training. Leaders have recently revised the school's Christian values to link with diocesan and national initiatives for pupil development and for education with an Anglican context. Parents are well informed of children's progress. Pupil voice is a significant part of development planning, actively feeding their ideas into the school's development plans and Christian ethos. The local vicar's presence and regular meetings with the headteacher contribute to the Anglican vision for the school's community links and development plan. RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.