

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Read St John's Church of England Primary School

Straits Lane, Read, Burnley, BB12 7PE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Lancashire
Dates of inspection	8 March and 16 March 2018
Date of last inspection	November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 119389
Headteacher	David Smith
Inspector's name and number	Gail Fullbrook 530

School context

St John's Primary School is a smaller than average sized primary school. A significant proportion of pupils travel to the school from outside of the immediate area. The majority of pupils attending the school are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with a statement for special educational needs or an education healthcare plan is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English or who are eligible for free school meals is also well below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian character threads through all aspects of school life and has a significant impact on the personal development and wellbeing of pupils.
- Strong relationships, founded on Christian values, are evident in the ways in which pupils and staff relate to and support one another.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the importance of prayer to the lives of Christians and those of other faiths. They offer prayer confidently and fluently.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a strength of this church school. This is because of the wide range of experiences offered and the excellence of pupils' responses to the needs of others.

Areas to improve

- In consultation with staff, governors, parents and children develop a Christian vision for the school that it is known and understood by all members of the school community. This will ensure that the school's Christian distinctiveness is at the centre of all decisions made about school improvement and the development of the school's Christian character.
- Develop understanding of spirituality and spiritual development. Identify ways in which this can be developed across the curriculum and through school life.
- Extend the range of ways in which pupils contribute to worship to support spiritual development and develop a greater sense of ownership of worship amongst pupils.

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

A strong commitment to the school's Christian foundation and to pupils' personal development and well-being underpins the work of the school. Pupils are valued as children of God and their educational needs are planned for and supported. Consequently, they make good progress and achieve well.

Pupils recognise the importance of Christian values in their lives, both at school and at home. They identify them as Christian values and talk knowledgeably about the ways in which they help them in their lives. Pupils' talk of persevering when things are difficult and recognise the importance of 'forgiving like Jesus did'. For example, they show Christian compassion in their responses to the needs of others.

Pupils' SMSC development is very good and is a strength of the school as a result of the school's strong Christian ethos. A wide range of opportunities, both within and beyond the curriculum, contribute to the breadth of pupils' experiences. They show Christian love towards pupils at their link school in Gambia and talk of the importance of issues such as basic health care and school equipment. Pupils show a high level of commitment to Christian stewardship. For example, following a talk about the importance of the air ambulance service, pupils raised funds so that people could continue to benefit from its work. Displays and artefacts in the entrance hall and around the school are well used by pupils and emphasise the school's Christian distinctiveness. In one display focussing on resolution and restoration, pupils share resolutions they have made and their reasons for doing so.

Positive relationships are rooted in Christian values. Pupils recognise their teachers' commitment to their wellbeing and welcome times when they can share things that worry or concern them. Necessary discussions between staff and parents about aspects of behaviour, attendance or punctuality are carried out supportively and sensitively. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good because, in the words of a Key Stage 2 pupil, 'that's how Jesus wants us to be'.

Pupils show respect and curiosity when talking about difference and diversity. They are aware of the uniqueness of each person but also that 'we're all the same really whatever we look like or are like'. This awareness supports pupils' cultural development and their positive attitudes to the difference and diversity they are familiar with in local towns and cities. The link with the school in Gambia adds a global dimension to their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

The RE curriculum makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. Biblical story and a focus on developing understanding of key Christian concepts results in pupils being able and willing to talk about Christian themes with confidence. Discussion about the thoughts and feelings of the biblical people they learn about supports pupils' SMSC development. For example, Year 3 pupils shared their understanding of how characters in the Easter story felt at each event during the week before Jesus' crucifixion.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily collective worship is central to the life of the school and valued and enjoyed by pupils. Effective planning incorporates themes based on the school's core values, important Christian festivals and stories from the Bible. As a result, pupils have an exemplary knowledge of biblical stories and a clear understanding of the importance of the festivals that form the Church year. Worship makes a significant contribution to the Christian ethos of the school and to pupils' understanding of core Christian values. Pupils thoughtfully reflect on links between Jesus' teaching and their attitudes, behaviour and relationships with one another. Regular Eucharistic worship introduces pupils to a more formal style of worship. This adds to their breadth of understanding of the different ways in which Christians worship.

Prayer is an important part of worship. Pupils recognise its importance as a time when they reflect on their own needs and the needs of others. They are familiar with a range of traditional prayers as well as being confident to offer their own prayers both within collective worship and quietly when on their own. Some classrooms have spaces that encourage prayer and reflection and the quiet area in the school grounds is a valued place to be. However, overall the school lacks a shared understanding of spirituality and of the ways in which pupils' spiritual development can be nurtured and developed.

Music makes a significant contribution to worship. Pupils sing with joy and passion and invoke a strong sense of prayerfulness through song. Songs are carefully chosen and pupils' engagement with the lyrics is apparent in the reverence with which they sing songs such as 'O Lord, hear my prayer' and their joy and exuberance when offering praise through song.

Supported by teaching in RE which focuses on key Christian theological concepts, pupils are developing a very good understanding of the concepts and the biblical stories that underpin them. Pupils have a particularly clear understanding of the Trinity. Older pupils reflect on the Trinity in mature and thoughtful ways. For example, a

Year 6 boy shared the complex image of Jesus praying to God whilst being of God himself.

Worship is led by staff, the vicar and occasionally by visitors from a neighbouring Christian community. Pupils are encouraged to make contributions within worship but do not routinely take responsibility for aspects of worship. Pupil feedback on worship, whilst often informal, is in place with changes being made in response to pupils' comments.

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

The school's Christian values are modelled by the headteacher, staff and governors and the school's foundation as a church school is secure and celebrated. Whilst the school has a distinctive Christian ethos, there is a lack of clarity about the underlying vision which guides and directs the school. Consequently, some aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness are not yet well developed. For example, pupils' spiritual development is not consistently nurtured through the school. In their commitment to developing the God given potential of each pupil, regardless of their needs or social disadvantage, the phrase 'nobody left behind' is used. Consequently pupils develop resilience, are willing to persevere and are secure in their knowledge of themselves as children of God. Provision for pupils' wellbeing and personal as well as academic development is very good. Pupils have access to regular counselling and prayer where they can share personal worries or concerns. This is very important to the pupils and has a significant impact on their well-being. Pupils' SMSC development is nurtured through the wide range of experiences offered within the curriculum and additional school activities.

School self-evaluation is thorough although there is a reluctance to discuss aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness overtly. Governors play an important role in the life of the school and are well informed. Their support of the school's Christian ethos is particularly strong. However, aspects of the schools distinctiveness are not routinely discussed in governors meetings. As a result, governors do not routinely hold the school to account for its distinctiveness in a formal way.

The school has good links with Blackburn Diocese particularly relating to teaching and learning in RE. In recent years priority has been given to the professional development of the RE subject leader and this is beginning to impact on the quality of RE through the school and the depth of pupils' understanding of key concepts. RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The relationship between the church community and the school is strong. Pupils worship regularly in church and the vicar is a frequent visitor offering support, chaplaincy and Christian advice.

Parents feel involved in their child's education. They recognise the ways in which the school's distinctive Christian ethos enriches pupils' lives and prepares them for their future.

SIAMS report March 2018 Read St John's CE VC Primary School, Read, BB12 7PE