Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

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| **Samlesbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School** | |
| Potters Lane, Samlesbury, Preston, Lancashire PR5 0UE | |
| **Current SIAMS inspection grade** | **Outstanding** |
| **Diocese** | **Blackburn** |
| Previous SIAS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Date of inspection | 25 January 2018 |
| Date of last inspection | March 2013 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Aided 119572 |
| Headteacher | Lucy Sutton |
| Inspector’s name and number | Anne B. Woodcock 445 |

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| **School context**  Samlesbury is a small rural school near Preston. The vast majority of pupils are White British heritage and they come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding for social disadvantage is well below average. The school supports a much lower than average proportion of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities. Recent remodelling of the building has enabled pupils to be taught in three mixed-age classes. The headteacher has been in post since January 2018. The previous headteacher was in post for three years. All teachers have been appointed within the last three years. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Samlesbury as a Church of England school are outstanding**   * Very well-established, explicitly expressed Christian values make a strong impact on pupils’ excellent behaviour and remarkably positive attitudes to life and learning. * The determined Christian leadership of the previous headteacher, ably supported by skilled governors and dedicated staff, has inspired and driven all aspects of school improvement. This has created a distinctly Christian learning environment in which all can flourish. * High quality teaching and learning in religious education (RE) contributes substantially to pupils’ mature understanding of diverse faiths and cultures, including the multi-cultural nature of Christianity. * Increasingly strong links with the church make a significant contribution to the school’s Christian character and to pupils’ spiritual development. |
| **Areas to improve**   * As the school moves into its next stage of development, engage all members of the school community in a review of its vision and values so that they more accurately reflects its flourishing Christian distinctiveness. * Extend the evaluation of collective worship so that it provides more immediate insight as to the impact worship has on all members of the school community. |

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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding**  **at meeting the needs of all learners**  Deeply embedded Christian values are thoroughly understood and lived by all members of the school community. A Year 3 pupil stated, ‘They come from Jesus who used parables to show us how God wants us to live.’ Pupils of all ages refer to Christian values, using the school’s ‘golden book’ to note when they have seen someone demonstrating a value such as compassion, friendship or trust. Parents recognise this. One parent explained, ‘Children learn to recognise and appreciate the Christian values in others.’ This demonstrates that the school’s aspiration to ‘be a Christian foundation that values and respects every member of the school’s community’ is consistently promoted and achieved. Pupils’ behaviour is exemplary because they consistently strive to apply their knowledge and understanding of these values.  Pupils are highly motivated, confident and enthusiastic learners who attend well. They strive to achieve the high expectations set for them by teachers who they respect and admire. All pupils make very good, sometimes rapid progress from their starting points. Standards of attainment are consistently high, being well above those achieved nationally. Based on its Christian foundation, those with additional needs are well supported so that all can flourish and achieve. Parents agree that the way in which their children are known, supported and nurtured prepared them very well for the next stage in their lives.  Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good. This is because they have frequent, high quality experiences through which they explore God’s world. In keeping with the underpinning Christian ethos, they express their ideas confidently and with remarkable maturity through art, prose and prayer within an atmosphere of trust and acceptance. Outdoor learning in the forest school, residential and other visits support the development of self-confidence and esteem. Pupils’ spiritual development is supported through the increasingly strong links with the church and the use of reflection. Interactive classroom reflection areas are used well and the outdoor reflection area, which was designed by pupils, continues to develop.  Pupils discuss global issues such as terrorism and disease maturely, recognising that they can, in a small way, make a difference. ‘One of our Christian values is generosity and Jesus wants us to help others, so that is why we raise money for charities,’ explained a Year 5 pupil. Pupils recognise their responsibilities to care for others. For example, a Year 3 pupil explained that they support charities because ‘people might need our help to survive’. Their awareness and understanding of diverse faiths and cultures is developed well through excellent RE. They appreciate and respect differences, including the way in which Christians in other countries celebrate and worship God. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**  Pupils’ remarkably enthusiastic and positive attitudes to collective worship demonstrate the participatory and inclusive nature of the school’s daily worship life. Collective worship is firmly based on Christian values and Bible teaching. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus. They talk confidently about parables, miracles and events in Jesus’ life. ‘Easter is when Jesus rose from the dead,’ stated a Year 2 pupil. ‘Jesus sacrificed himself to save us all,’ added a Year 5 pupil. Pupils make clear links between their knowledge of parables, values, their own actions and Christian service. A Year 6 pupil wrote, ‘I can refer back to worship to help me in real life situations.’  Pupils experience a range of worship led by staff, clergy and visitors. The vicar and lay reader lead worship in school and in church. They support pupils’ experience of some traditional Anglican practices. As a result, pupils are familiar with the Eucharist and the use of prayers and responses. The church is used for end of term and festival services. Parents and friends attend these services, valuing the opportunity to share in their children’s work and worship. Such events confirm the school’s relationship with the church and local community.  Pupils speak assuredly about their understanding of God. ‘God is like a father so you can say anything to him. You can feel him in your soul,’ stated a Year 6 pupil. Their understanding of the Christian concept of the Trinity is supported by the use of three candles and prayers. Prayer and reflection are key features of daily worship. Pupils know the Lord’s Prayer and graces. They write and use their own prayers, some of which are displayed around school. Pupils’ personal prayers, placed in a special box, are taken into church and blessed. Pupils plan and lead worship regularly. Pupils of all ages plan and lead weekly celebration worship, to which parents are invited, as well as the end of term services in church. They talk confidently about the key elements of worship, such as prayer and praise which must always be included. This reflects their deepening understanding of the nature of worship.  Worship is effectively monitored and evaluated by governors and senior leaders. Recent pupil questionnaires reflect the overall impact of worship. However, as feedback is not collected frequently, valuable insight as to the impact of collective worship on the lives of all members of the school community lacks immediacy. |
| **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding** Pupils are clearly enthused by their work in RE. ‘We always learn something new. It is fun and we talk a lot and share our opinions,’ explained a Year 5 pupil. The curriculum is well balanced and RE themes are developed through cross-curricular topics. It promotes the development of skills such as investigation and analysis. It encourages pupils to share their opinions about belief respectfully, in an atmosphere of acceptance. In doing so, RE makes a substantial contribution to pupils’ personal and SMSC development.  Teaching is of a consistently high quality. Lessons are planned creatively, making good use of available resources to meet the different learning styles and needs of all pupils. They inspire, challenge and support pupils. As a result, they make good, sometimes rapid, progress. The standards attained are in line with those achieved in English and mathematics. This is demonstrated in pupils’ work, class scrapbooks and displays, all of which reflect the pride taken in their work.  RE is led by an extremely capable, dedicated teacher whose expertise and vision inspires and drives improvement. All staff feel well supported, so they approach new materials and the newly introduced diocesan syllabus confidently. Assessment systems are in place. Although they continue to be refined and adapted in the light of the new syllabus, they track pupil progress, identify gaps in learning and inform future teaching effectively. Marking is effective because it shows pupils how to improve their work. RE is monitored and evaluated robustly by senior leaders. Governors observe lessons, meet with teachers and share work scrutinies, so that they have a very clear idea of the curriculum, standards and progress.  Through the study of religions such as Hinduism and Islam, pupils gain valuable knowledge and understanding of diverse faiths, cultures and ways of life. Visits to places of worship, including a mosque, provide valuable first-hand experiences. As a result, pupils recognise similarities as well as differences between major world faiths. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils described the relationship between the Last Supper, Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt and the Jewish festival of Pesach. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good**  All members of the school community agree that the determined leadership of the previous headteacher, who left at the end of December 2017, revitalised the school. He worked with governors to bring about changes which re-affirmed the school’s distinctive Christian character and created a united, respected staff team. As a result, outcomes for pupils continue to be very good and relationships across the school community have been strengthened.  Governors have a very clear idea of their strategic role and responsibilities. Challenging staffing issues have been managed with Christian compassion. Governors ensure that the needs of all pupils are met through the effective use of financial and human resources. They ensured that the issues for development from the previous denominational inspection have been fully addressed. Effective monitoring highlights continued improvement. Church school self-evaluation is robust. The views of parents are regularly canvassed and they show that they fully understand and uphold the school’s Christian values. Governors have secured strong, capable leadership for RE and collective worship. Both are well-supported and resourced and they meet all statutory requirements.  Links with the church have improved substantially over the past three years so that they are now mutually supportive. For example, the church has invested in technological equipment for use by pupils when they lead school, or share family worship in church. Links with the local and wider world, particularly through charitable work, support pupils’ understanding of community.  Increasingly effective use is made of partnerships to support aspects of governance and curriculum development. Governors have benefitted from some diocesan training to support their understanding of church school issues. Diocesan support for the development of RE is highly effective. The small school cluster to which the school belongs actively supports teaching and learning. Strategic planning is well-considered and it supports the future leadership of church schools. Governors have ensured that the school continues to be led by a headteacher who is fully committed to its distinctive Christian ethos. In keeping with the school’s ongoing cycle of improvement, and in the light of the new headteacher, governors and leaders rightly agree that a full review of the school’s Christian vision and values is appropriate. This is in order that the statements correctly reflect the school’s present position and to support its further development as an outstanding church school. |

SIAMS report January 2018, Samlesbury Church of England Primary School, Samlesbury, Preston PR5 0UE