

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Winmarleigh Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Lane, Winmarleigh, Preston, PR3 0LA

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	11 July 2017
Date of last inspection	April 2015
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 119545
Associate Headteacher	Helen Ife
Inspector's name and number	Tracy Hallows 831

School context

This much smaller than average primary school is situated in a rural area close to the market town of Garstang. There are currently 26 pupils on roll from both the local and wider community. The pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds. They are predominantly White British. The percentage of pupils with additional needs is above the national average. The school has recently detached from a collaboration with a small rural school and is now working in partnership with a school from Garstang. The associate head teacher has been in post since September 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Winmarleigh as a Church of England school are good

- The tangible family atmosphere characterised by a distinctive Christian ethos of care and concern ensures that all feel safe and secure. As a result of this relationships throughout the school demonstrate mutual respect and Christ's love is evident in interactions.
- The inspirational and committed Christian leadership of the headteacher ably supported by strong foundation governors, staff and parents has had a significant impact on creating an inclusive, welcoming and harmonious learning environment for all pupils.
- Daily worship is at the centre of the school's spiritual life and has an inspiring and transformational impact on those who take part.

Areas to improve

- Embed the Christian teaching underpinning the schools chosen Christian values so that all pupils have a clear sense of the centrality of Jesus Christ in these values.
- Ensure that pupils have an increasing knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

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

There is a strong sense of the Christian foundation of the school which enables every pupil to explore their own faith journey in a climate of inclusion and acceptance. As a result pupils confidently talk about their own beliefs, expressing their thoughts and views in depth. All are treated with dignity, respected and valued as individuals to be fully nurtured in this caring Christian environment. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is nourished and challenged through this inclusive Christian community. Pupils are encouraged to explore challenging questions across the curriculum. There is an amazing sense of wonder at the natural world surrounding them. On finding a shrew in the school playground the whole school took advantage of this with older pupils researching and then sharing their findings with younger pupils. One Reception child said 'we have to look after God's creatures.' Displays of Christian artefacts, Bible quotes throughout the school and the 'big questions' in the conservatory clearly express the school's Christian distinctiveness and promote discussions. An effective pupil ethos team allows pupils to make a positive contribution to both the planning and evaluation of the Christian distinctiveness of their school. Pupils talk excitedly about the mural they have been involved in planning, '...it has a rainbow to show that God forgives us and reminds us that He will keep His promises'. Religious Education (RE) also makes a very significant contribution to pupils' development. Good teaching and a range of activities promotes skills of enquiry that pupils are able to apply to other subjects. Self-awareness, understanding and knowledge of other faiths and cultures are also enhanced through RE. This contributes well to pupils' understanding of difference and diversity. However, pupils have a limited awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Behaviour is excellent. Where there are minor issues Christian principles of forgiveness and reconciliation are clearly applied. Pupils in all ability groups make good progress and achieve well. Most reach good standards of attainment in line with national expectation in their academic work. Effective intervention programmes and excellent special needs provision ensures disadvantaged pupils' attainment is higher than that of similar pupils nationally. Each pupil is well known and the governors have an impressive understanding of how provision ensures that, 'each child is nurtured and loved as a unique creation of God'. This impacts positively on pupils' wellbeing and sense of belonging. The intimate family atmosphere enables pupils to feel secure and confident. Those that have joined the school since Reception recognise that there is something different about their school, 'we learn a lot about Jesus here and He wants us all to be the best, that's why this school is the best'. Pupils are well motivated, enthusiastic and enjoy their learning and as a result attendance is above the national average. There is a distinctively Christian set of values introduced recently. Most members of the community can articulate these and have a deepening understanding of how they apply to daily life. The underpinning Christian teaching of each value is not yet embedded and therefore pupils tend to relate these as general shared human values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is the heart beat of this school and as such is integral to all aspects of school life. All recognise the importance of meeting together to worship at several points throughout the school day. Pupils proudly invite visitors to join them for collective worship and to share prayers at other times of the school day. Pupils are enthusiastic, thoughtful, attentive and responsive during worship. Worship is distinctively Christian in character, using biblical material and imagery, resulting in pupils who can speak confidently about stories from the Bible. For example, a Year 6 pupil commenting on the morning worship led by Year 3 pupils said, 'Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan to show that courage is about doing something that is right, even if other people are against it'. Worship has an inspirational impact on the lives of those involved. Pupils are able to recognise the importance of Jesus for Christians and have an impressive knowledge and understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, 'our Trinity tassel reminds us that God is one but has three parts.' Adults are also fully engaged and comment on how worshipping together both in school and in church contributes to their faith journey. Spaces inside and outside are regularly used for worship and a variety of people lead it which gives the pupils a rich and diverse experience. Prayer is central to school life and makes a significant contribution to the spiritual development of the whole community. There are places to pray around school and all recognise that a 'quiet moment with God,' is helpful. Pupils can articulate a variety of situations in which prayer is useful and use imagery from their own experience. A Year 2 child said, 'prayer is like having a mobile phone to talk to God anytime. If you are happy, sad or angry it doesn't matter, God is always ready to listen'. Pupils write their own prayers confidently and are familiar with prayers and responses from the Anglican tradition. Worship themes are planned by the headteacher in consultation with the vicar. Planning is detailed and provides appropriate focus, including on the school's chosen Christian values. Pupils are fully involved in planning the worship based on their given value. This involvement develops their confidence and they lead worship with appropriate reverence and enthusiasm. Scrap books show how the planning develops and detailed evaluation by the whole school community enables strengths and areas for development to be identified. This ensures that worship is constantly evolving and improving. There is now a structure to worship which helps to introduce pupils to Anglican traditions. Seasons of the Church's year are identified through the use of appropriate colours. All major Christian festivals are included in the programme. This

means that pupils have a developing knowledge and understanding of the significance of these practices for Anglicans and for the Christian church more widely.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The priority given to RE has recently been heightened. The associate headteacher leads the subject with enthusiasm and as a result has inspired effective teaching. She is ably supported by a colleague from the partner school in Garstang. Joint planning and evaluation has been effective in raising standards. They are now in line with national expectations and compare favourably with other core subjects in school. Governors are involved in evaluating RE too. This enables them to set effective targets for improvement. They have monitored the progress of addressing issues raised in the last inspection and can confidently explain how standards have been raised. Teachers have received joint training and support from the Diocese since the previous denominational inspection and now have a good knowledge of the subject. Their effective questioning helps to develop the pupil's thinking skills. The Diocesan syllabus is used effectively to ensure there is an appropriate balance between Christianity and other world faiths. Pupils are encouraged to raise challenging questions both of their peers and of the staff. Following a lesson about Deborah, the judge from the Old Testament, pupils debated and asked thought provoking questions about the morality of using killing in warfare. The school has accurately identified that reflective and critical thinking is a strength of RE lessons. Teaching develops pupils learning beyond factual knowledge and explores the implications of the beliefs of different groups of people. Following a recent whole school visit to a synagogue pupils talked enthusiastically about what they had learned. One pupil expressed how difficult he would find it to follow the food rules in Judaism. The younger pupils enjoyed setting the table for the Shabbat meal and making challah bread. There is a robust assessment procedure used by all staff which gives a clear indication of progress and this is used to inform future planning. In some lessons activities are not always matched to individual pupil needs. Challenge for the more able tends to be through questioning. Marking in RE books usually focusses on the objective of the lesson and pupils are challenged to extend their learning. Scrap books and pupils' individual books provide a wealth of evidence of the rich and varied curriculum provided in RE. The pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of the Christian faith. Teaching in both classes is good. A wide range of learning activities ensures that pupils enjoy their RE lessons, 'my teacher uses lots of different things to make it interesting. I like asking questions when someone is in the 'hot seat'.

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

The associate headteacher has already made a significant impact on developing the school as a distinctive church school. Her personal deep Christian faith and love of Jesus shines. The governors share her passion and determination to make this a place where all are recognised as children of God: 'life may throw many unexpected things at us but no one can take God from us, that's what we want our children to know.' As a result the distinctive Christian vision is effectively promoted throughout the school. Parents agree that at this church school. 'Christianity is life, not a layer on top of life. It moves beyond school and permeates every aspect of home too'. One parent shared how the prayer life in the school was instrumental in helping her child deal with challenging issues. The headteacher firmly believes that a church school should clearly extend the love of Christ to all. In doing this the school is successfully challenging each to, 'enjoy all God has given us, believe in God's love as shown in Jesus and achieve through Christian faith and school values.' This vision impacts positively on the wellbeing of pupils and staff with clear accountability and support structures in place. There is a robust cycle for monitoring and giving feedback. Appraisal is rigorous and as a result of this all teaching is at least good and in some cases better. Governors understand the balance of support and challenge. There is a wide range of Christian experience on the governing body. They frequently visit the school and know the pupils and staff very well. They ask searching questions and as a result are able to evaluate the schools performance accurately. Consequently, challenging but realistic targets are set. The recently formed values and visions committee, which includes parents, governors and staff, has been proactive in setting the strategic direction for improvement of the school's Christian distinctiveness. A values day was held in February 2017 successfully launched the school's agreed Christian values. These values are now beginning to permeate school life. Governors are well aware of the importance of recruitment, staff development and succession planning. They have successfully used the Diocese to support them in making links with local schools and in employing the associate headteacher. The very proactive vicar and curate provide excellent links with the local church. The school and church are mutually supportive of each other which strengthens this Christian community. As a result of strong leadership in RE the subject area has improved significantly since the previous denominational inspection. Issue for improvement from that time have been appropriately addressed. RE meets statutory requirements as does the worship programme which goes above and beyond what is required resulting in a positive experience for all.