

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Great Harwood St John's Church of England Primary School			
Address	St John's Street Great Harwood Lancashire BB6 7ES		
Date of inspection	15 November 2018	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Blackburn	URN	119421

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Great Harwood St John's is a Voluntary Aided primary school with 151 pupils on roll and is located on two sites. The school has a high level of religious and cultural diversity and many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. Since the last inspection, there have been changes in leadership with the appointment of an assistant headteacher and a new RE subject leader.

The school's Christian vision

St John's Church of England Primary School is a distinctively Christian family school with Jesus at its heart. All children are provided with opportunities to 'shine with God's love' through its outstanding curriculum and enrichment activities. All children are encouraged to flourish, accomplish and to be 'the best that they can be'.

Key findings

- A strong Christian vision and distinctive Christian values guide all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils and adults flourish in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Pupils live out the school's Christian vision through the care that they express towards others in their willingness to engage in social action locally, nationally and globally.
- As a result of embedded Christian values, pupils' behaviour is exemplary and the mental health and wellbeing of the school family is a high priority.
- Collective worship reflects the Christian vision and inspires spiritual growth in pupils and adults. Many are able to relate the teachings of Jesus and the Bible to their own lives.
- RE teaching and learning is consistently good and often better. It is taught in a creative and imaginative way, which allows pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to gain a respectful understanding of Christianity and a range of other religions.

Areas for development

- To establish more rigorous and effective systems of monitoring and evaluation involving all members of the school community so as to inform future school development.
- To carry out a review of the curriculum to ensure that pupils of all ages have opportunities to express their views and develop skills in decision-making and debate.
- To embed the work of the worship warriors so that they have more frequent opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Leaders live out the school's vision which is firmly underpinned by the Christian faith and shapes school development priorities and policies. Those of all abilities, faiths and backgrounds feel welcomed through the expressions of love and acceptance which spring from the chosen values. However, monitoring and evaluation of the vision is limited. Strong, caring and nurturing relationships exist allowing adults and pupils to flourish. Staff, governors and parents say that they feel part of one big family and are extremely comfortable approaching the school for support. One parent explained, 'I have always been welcomed with open arms, no problem big or small is ever too much.' Partnerships with other schools and the diocese effectively support church school improvement as is the case with the joint spirituality days. This supports succession planning, ensuring that future church school leadership is secure. Leaders ensure that through professional development, staff are supported and equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to fulfil their roles in a church school.

The school's vision of providing pupils opportunities to 'shine' is reflected in its curriculum. The vast majority of all pupils make good progress and have high aspirations. Planning provides a breadth of experiences and is highly inclusive. It is particularly aimed at providing creative and real-life experiences for vulnerable pupils. One example is the provision of a cooker in one classroom, allowing young carers to acquire knowledge and skills for their lives outside school. Staff share a clear and secure understanding of spiritual development that is distinguishable from social, moral and cultural development. Extra-curricular activities such as trips to the beach and different places of worship result in a widening of pupils' horizons and life experiences. They also contribute to other opportunities for spiritual development which are woven into the curriculum. The decision to invest in projects such as Forest School not only allows pupils to gain confidence and develop resilience but also provides valuable spiritual experiences. During the outdoor sessions, and in the follow up lessons in class, they can explore their feelings about themselves, the world around them and their relationship with God. They are however lacking confidence in some areas of debate and discussion.

The school describes itself as 'A place where people help us to be the best that we can'. This is demonstrated by members of the Pupil Parliament who speak confidently about their work, their aspirations and how Christian values influence their choices. Referring to the value of respect, one pupil stated 'Everyone is friendly in this school, we're all different but we have respect for each other. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from.' The school's vision is reflected throughout the environment. Interactive displays, class big books, indoor and outdoor resources and prayer and reflection areas are used to explore 'big questions'. This results in pupils being motivated, comforted and celebrated as gifts from God. The Christian vision and values impact positively on pupils' desire to challenge injustice. They strive to improve the lives of others through the work of the class charity champions. The school engages with global links through organisations such as The Bethany Project. These links have resulted in pupils having a deeper understanding of global issues.

Guided by the vision, all staff and leaders work tirelessly so that pupils and adults can flourish and live well together. Consequently, standards of behaviour are very high, with forgiveness and reconciliation accepted as common practice. The wellbeing and mental health of all members of the school community is a key priority. In order to achieve this the school's vision is lived out in a practical and hands-on way. Families and staff value the frequent acts of kindness and compassion shown towards them. The caring and supportive work of the family support worker and agencies such as Caritas Care is pivotal in ensuring that the needs of families and individuals are quickly identified and met. Teachers talk about families and individual pupils with compassion and respect. Parents and pupils recognise the commitment that the school has to supporting and including them. Diversity is celebrated at St John's with adults and pupils speaking of the pride they have in their school and the family that it represents.

Leaders ensure that up to date policies related to dignity and respect reflect the school's vision in a transparent and clearly understood way. Through the curriculum, pupils learn to understand, respect and celebrate difference and diversity, a good example being the Odd Socks day. The school's vision and values are effectively communicated in various forms such as the newsletter so that everyone associated with the school understands their importance. One grandparent commented 'I cannot adequately explain how pleased I am with the fantastic way she is being taught values and care for others. She understands that all people are important and deserve to

be treated with respect whatever their beliefs.'

Collective worship is a much valued and vital part of the school day. Carefully planned themes ensure that everyone enjoys a varied, sincere and moving experience. However, although the worship warriors make valuable contributions they have limited opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate worship. Spiritual and moral reflection are significant elements in worship so that pupils take away thoughts and ideas that impact on their spiritual growth and daily lives. An example is the remembrance themed worship and subsequent pupils' artwork in memory of those who died in World War I. Although worship includes different elements such as music, story and reflection, varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship are not evident. Pupils and adults say that the vision prayer, written by pupils, inspires them and is a constant reminder of the Christian vision. The relationship between the church and the school is mutually beneficial. Pupils enjoy their visits to the local church and look forward to visits from the local clergy.

In summary, through its Christian vision, the school makes a difference to many adults and pupils. It helps them to be the best that they can and, in the words of one pupil, 'Trust God and anything can be possible.'



The effectiveness of RE is Good

RE teaching reflects the school's vision. It is led with ambition and expertise and is seen as a core subject. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good progress. With the new RE curriculum there is an updated assessment system, but this is not yet fully effective. RE lessons offer pupils the opportunity to ask and answer searching questions. In a lesson that focussed on feelings, pupils confidently discussed Jesus' emotions at certain times in his life. One child commented that 'I think Jesus is happy because he likes helping people out. He is the person who always helps us out.' Older pupils understand that Christianity is a global faith and know that 'Christianity is everywhere!' as one pupil said. The positive and clear links between the school and its diverse community support RE teaching and result in pupils having a good understanding of different faiths.

Headteacher

Tracey Parker

Inspector's name and number

Ann Aspden 858