



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Road
Heysham
Morecambe
Lancashire
LA3 2RF

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 30th April 2015

Date of last inspection: July 2010

School's unique reference number: 119537

Headteacher: David McPartlin

Inspector's name and number: Ann Aspden (Trainee)

Lizzie McWhirter (Quality Assurance Assessor)

School context

This larger than average sized school serves the village of Heysham on the outskirts of Morecambe. It is situated in a semi rural area and has generous sized buildings, playgrounds and outdoor areas. The vast majority of children are White British and are from mixed socio-economic backgrounds and ability. The school has strong links with the parish and the local community and has been oversubscribed for a number of years. Since the last inspection in 2010, a new headteacher has been appointed, there has been an interregnum at the church and a new vicar has recently been appointed.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school is seen as a Christian family by parents, children, staff and governors where Christian values guide all aspects of school life.
- The strong Christian vision and leadership of the headteacher ensures the Christian character of this school is of paramount importance. This is enthusiastically endorsed and supported by all staff and governors.
- The dedicated work of the religious education (RE) subject leader and worship coordinator has had a significant impact on standards in this church school.

Areas to improve

- Embed the monitoring and evaluation of children's progress in RE so that it is consistent across all year groups.
- Raise awareness of the diversity and differences in society by developing the teaching of other faiths in RE.

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

From their first day in school, every child is welcomed as a valued and special member of the school's Christian family. This welcome is underpinned by Christian values which enable children to excel in academic achievement, progress and their overall development and which are understood and demonstrated by all members of the school community. The children talk about Christian values, such as service and love, as being 'what Jesus did and what they do in their lives'. Excellent examples include the way a tragic episode in the life of the school was handled in a sensitive manner that reflects the school's ethos. As a result, the children explain the reason for the Emily statue on the Key Stage 2 playground in a way that demonstrates the high level of spirituality that exists in the school. The school environment sends out a clear message that Jesus is central to the life of the school through vibrant and interactive displays. Members of staff demonstrate their commitment to the Christian ethos through voluntary service such as the very popular Jesus And Me (JAM) after school club. The children's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is clear from the displays and from the children's comments about 'people all around the world celebrating Jesus Christ, the son of God'. Christian forgiveness is key in behaviour management and relationships are excellent. The school's strong Christian character results in exceptional attitudes to learning and behaviour and high levels of attainment and progress for all children. RE makes an invaluable contribution to the Christian character of the school. It provides a convincing foundation for and teaches about the source of the Christian centred values that drive the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of children is of a very high standard. However, the school acknowledges that further work is needed in ensuring that the children are fully aware of other faiths and cultures.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is sincere, varied and relevant with a clear focus on Christian teaching and biblical references. Collective worship is at the heart of school life and the impact is striking; all members of the school community actively engage with prayer and reflection. Worship focuses on individual Christian values. Excellent examples include the linking of the Christian value of service to personal experiences, such as the child whose father received an MBE, thus impacting greatly on the children's SMSC development. Recent changes and improvements which are the result of thorough whole school self evaluation, have had a significant impact on standards. Children lead worship regularly and each class invites their families into class worship each term. Parents are delighted to be invited and believe that they show that the school is a strong Christian family. The children's evaluations of individual acts of worship are insightful and demonstrate the spiritual and moral reflection that takes place. In response to the theme of Justice, one child wrote that she felt that the act of worship had taught her about fairness. Another child commented that 'If someone is picking on someone else you could say to your friends, Let's go and help him and we can stand up for him'. Opportunities for spontaneous prayer are evident throughout the school. The outdoor poppy garden is seen as a place that shows the love of those who died and where children can remember those who gave their lives. Prayer is embedded in the life of the school as was demonstrated in RE lessons with children explaining that 'You can pray wherever you want - at home, at school, everywhere!' At the same time, the children's experiences during worship are reflected in their lives outside school; parents and governors speak about how prayers and other school materials are used in the Sunday School attended by many of the children and their families. School worship is led by different members of the community leading to a rich experience for everyone involved. The school and its parents see the appointment of a new vicar as an opportunity to strengthen further the links that the school has with the church. The introduction of the Family Eucharist is a significant step towards embedding the children's understanding of The Trinity. The school

recognises that the role of the newly formed worship group will be key in maintaining and developing the already high standards and future developments in this area.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The profile of the RE subject leader has increased over recent years, significantly impacting on the teaching of RE across the school. Staff have benefited from in-house training led by the subject leader. RE now has the same status as other core subjects and is planned to the same rigorous standard. The children take great pride in their work as is evident in the class scrap books and school displays. The diocesan RE syllabus is used in a way that makes lessons fun and hands-on. Both the indoor and outdoor environments are used. Good examples include children planting leeks as part of their work on Christian saints such as David and creating stained glass windows to depict the lives of other saints. RE teaching is highly inclusive and caters for all abilities. The creative and practical approach in the nurture group immediately engages the children filling them with enthusiasm for their learning. Governors, and in particular the link governor, speak highly of the progress that has been made in RE teaching. They are well informed about developments as a result of increased involvement in monitoring and evaluation. There is a good link between spirituality and RE teaching. Children talk about how what they learn in RE lessons influences their daily lives. A child spoke about a unit of work on prayer and how he prayed at home and talked to God in this way. Whilst there is some evidence of assessment and children's progress, this has still to become embedded in all year groups. The school realises that the development of the teaching of other faiths is an area to be addressed in order for children to have full understanding of the diversity of a multi-faith society.

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

Senior leaders drive the school forward with relentless rigour and determination. Their enthusiasm and passion is shared by parents, one of whom said 'We all come together as one big family in Christ'. Since the last inspection, all members of the school community have been involved in a review of the school's mission, aims and worship patterns. This results in a clarity of vision and shared belief. The headteacher's clear and transparent approach is appreciated and seen as a strength of the school resulting in open channels of communication and a sense of trust. A consistent belief in an ethos that is firmly based on Christian values results in high standards in many areas of achievement. The wellbeing of both adults and children is of a high priority. All members of the school community live out the school's mission to excellent effect, with friendship, love and care for each other prominent. Governors are rightly proud of the school, have a clear vision and feel that the Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life. One commented that 'Christian values are the golden thread that runs through the school'. Worship and RE have become a high priority that has significantly contributed to the development of SMSC. Governors are sure of their role in 'safeguarding and caring for the children physically, spiritually and morally' and have secured high quality Christian leadership at all levels. However, their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school as a critical friend is recognised as a feature of future development. Professional development is a key feature of school life. Teamwork, coaching and excellent in-service training prepare staff well for current and future leadership roles. Senior leaders and parents see the use of the church and the involvement of the newly appointed vicar as key to enhancing this excellent partnership. The pupil voice is extremely strong. Good examples include the explanation of how they raise funds for different charities because God wants them to show love and concern for the less fortunate. One child explained how she had raised money for Christian Aid through an 'Out of the Box' project by making and selling smoothies and Bombay potatoes. The school acknowledges that sharing its good practice and pursuing professional development for both staff and the governing body through partnerships with other church schools is very much part of its ongoing journey.