



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Westhead Lathom St. James CofE Primary School

School Lane
Westhead
L40 6HL

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Liverpool

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 18 June 2015

Date of last inspection: February 2010

School's unique reference number: 119377

Headteacher: Alison Albion

Inspector's name and number: Jean Forward (625)

School context

St. James is a small semi-rural primary school. The proportion of children with special educational needs or disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion of children who receive funding through the pupil premium. Ofsted Data Dashboard for 2014 shows that attainment and progress in writing and mathematics was above the national average at the end of Year 6. Attainment and progress in reading were in line with the national average. Attendance was also in line with the national average in 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness St. James as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The inspirational Christian leadership of the headteacher and her vision for the development of the school ensure church school distinctiveness is a priority.
- The school is extremely successful in creating a caring environment underpinned by Christian values which has a direct influence on children's well-being, personal development and academic success.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is outstanding and is rooted in the school's Christian ethos and approach to spirituality.
- Links with the parish church of St. James, Westhead are extremely strong. As a result, children have a clear sense of belonging to the wider Christian community.

Areas to improve

- Extend the formal evaluation of collective worship so that staff, governors and parents contribute to the monitoring process.
- Appoint a governor for church school distinctiveness in order to broaden discussion and support the headteacher's vision for the school's distinctive Christian character.

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

A strong commitment to Christian values and the development of the whole child underpin the work of this small semi-rural school. Children are able to talk with confidence about the importance of core Christian values. The school's promotion of these values is evident across the curriculum and in the daily life of the school. The school's weekly newsletter is used to ensure that families are aware of the focus value for each half-term. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding as a result of the focused Christian ethos. Behaviour is outstanding and expectations are consistently linked to the school's core Christian values. As a result, children demonstrate high levels of self-esteem and awareness of others. All members of the community know that they are valued and the outstanding ethos of trust and respect is clearly evident. Children are extremely courteous, friendly and responsible. They know that their opinions and ideas will be valued. They comment that they are able to share concerns with their teachers and they know that these will be addressed in a sensitive way. A parent said, 'We feel secure in the knowledge that our children are respected, loved and cared for by the exceptional staff.' They also say that they feel welcome in the school and that staff are approachable and supportive. The school has a strong commitment to Christian stewardship, supporting a range of charities including Pearl of Africa and the Nepal disaster appeal. Children spoke of the importance of showing generosity and compassion for those in need. Through their charitable giving, the children also learn more about Christianity as a world-wide faith. Interactive displays and Christian signs and symbols emphasise the school's distinctiveness and support the children's spiritual awareness and development extremely well. Children value the reflection areas in their classrooms and the prayer station and say that these help them to think and pray. Children from each year group are chosen to be members of the ethos group. They described how they are helping to design an outdoor spiritual garden. During the discussion, they showed that they understand the importance of time for reflection and peace. The school delivers highly effective teaching about faiths other than Christianity in religious education (RE). This contributes well to children's cultural development and positive attitudes. The outstanding Christian environment creates a culture in which all children are able to feel secure and supported. As a result, they are able to learn with confidence. Links with St. James church are well-established. Members of the congregation are involved in joint activities with the school which bring the village community together.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The act of collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. Planning is thorough and incorporates themes based on Christian values, the Bible, major Christian festivals and saints' days. When appropriate, the worship plan also includes reference to key festivals of other faiths. The school places Christ at the centre of all it does. Collective worship enables children of all ages to understand how the teaching of Jesus guides Christians in their daily lives. Links are also made with the work children do in RE. The headteacher monitors and evaluates the planning and delivery of worship. Members of the ethos group also contribute to the evaluation process. Children have the opportunity to plan and lead worship regularly and during the school's worship week. Y6 children described how they had prepared PowerPoint displays for the rest of the school. The children demonstrate a high level of involvement and enjoyment during worship. The whole school listened attentively during an act of worship which focused on looking beyond appearances in order to understand the person within. Silence and moments for reflection play an important part in the school's approach to prayer. Anglican responses and traditional prayers also contribute to the highly successful development of children's prayer life. Worship songs are chosen carefully in order to support the central themes. The parish priest from St. James church leads worship in school and supports many activities linked to the development of the children's faith and understanding. Children from the ethos committee said that they enjoy his visits and that he teaches them

new things about being a Christian. He is also involved in the planning of worship. Members of the Sunday school team lead worship on a regular basis. The school visits the parish church for major festivals and these visits make an excellent contribution to children's spiritual development, reflection and understanding. The visits also create a unique link with the worshipping life of the parish and the Anglican tradition. Worship also enables children to deepen their understanding of the nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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

The headteacher is a dedicated Christian leader who takes every opportunity to promote the school's distinctive Christian character. Through her leadership, staff and governors are committed to sustaining an outstanding Christian environment in which all aspects of children's development and wellbeing are fostered and promoted. Together, they are highly effective in identifying clear priorities for the development of the school's Christian ethos. A parent said, 'This is a very special school', attributing children's happiness and success to the Christian values at the heart of the school's daily life. Excellent policies and planning have Christian values and the school's vision at their heart. Foundation governors are knowledgeable and have a clear understanding of their role. They are highly effective and support the school in a variety of ways. The headteacher shares detailed developments relating to Christian distinctiveness in her reports to the full governing body. This ensures that all aspects of church school distinctiveness continue to contribute to the development of the school's Christian foundation. The governing body has recently started the process of changing the school's designation to that of an aided school. Excellent provision is made for all staff to participate in continuous professional development. This makes a valuable contribution to succession planning and to highly effective teaching and learning throughout the school. RE is well-led and a programme of lesson observations, book scrutiny and a sound approach to marking and assessment ensure that standards are in line with those in other subjects. The quality of teaching enhances children's SMSC development. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian qualities of the school and speak highly of the respect with which they and their children are treated. Parents speak about the ways in which the school and church work together to provide an outstanding Christian education. The school has strong links with the diocese through headteacher cluster meetings and opportunities for professional development. These activities support the outstanding commitment to the school's distinctive Christian character.

SIAMS report June 2015 St. James CofE Primary School, Westhead L40 6HL