

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St Anne's CE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Broadway, Royton, Oldham, OL2 5DH

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese**

**Manchester**

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Oldham

Date of inspection

23 March 2017

Date of last inspection

May 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

VA Primary. URN: 105715

Headteacher

Sue Holt

Inspector's name and number

Stephen Burrow 622

### School context

St Anne's CE Primary School is a larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is slightly higher than found nationally. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is similar to the national average. Attendance is above average. The school and church have strong historical links, with school buildings being regularly used by church groups.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Anne's CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong, purposeful Christian leadership of the headteacher, supported by committed staff and governors, ensures that pupils maximise both their personal and academic achievement.
- A deeply embedded Christian ethos underpins all that the school does. Pupils are highly valued and nurtured as individuals in a caring Christian environment.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) contribute significantly to the promotion of distinctive Christian values and significantly enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The strong, mutually supportive links with the vicar and church family, make a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and to the spiritual development of all members of its community.
- The explicit Christian character of the school, enhanced by Christian symbols and high quality displays of pupils' work, creates a very positive, welcoming and supportive atmosphere for everyone involved with the school.

### Areas to improve

- Establish ways for pupils to be more involved in the planning of worship, so that their ideas and thoughts can be shared and discussed in order to enrich the experience of worship.
- Engage pupils with the Christian idea of God as the Trinity so they can talk about this belief with understanding.

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

The distinctive Christian character is evident in all areas of school life and is central to its ethos and vision, 'Growing Together to Flourish in God's World'. Christian values are explicitly expressed, deeply embedded and clearly understood by all members of the school family. As a result, strong mutually nurturing and supportive relationships, firmly rooted in respect and forgiveness, exist throughout the school. Each child is known as a unique individual. Everyone subscribes to the school's 'Golden Promise,' driven through the application of gospel values to everyday life. Consequently, behaviour is of the highest standard. Pupils feel safe, happy, valued and well cared for. They mirror excellent role models that adults in the school provide. The high profile of RE and worship within the school makes a significant contribution to its Christian character. For example, learning about Christianity and other world faiths very effectively promotes pupils' acceptance of and respect for the views and beliefs of others. The curriculum is rich and varied and provides a wide range of experiences. These contribute greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All that the school does is underpinned by its distinctive Christian ethos. As a result, pupils' achievement, is at least in line with and often above national outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2. A 'Wall of Wonder', prayer boxes, a prayer garden and reflection areas in all classrooms are used by pupils for thinking and praying, thereby making a significant contribution to their spiritual development. A group of pupils explained, 'We all pray together as a school and like to show our feelings about God.' High quality displays emphasise the school's distinctiveness and support pupils' spiritual development and awareness extremely well. The school is very supportive of all families, based upon a clear understanding of each pupil's unique personal needs. Staff work very hard to intervene early where support is needed and ensure that all concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively. As a result, there are excellent relationships with parents and attendance is high. The school's strong emphasis on caring for others leads pupils to raise money for charities such as NSPCC and 'Stand up to Cancer'. Learning from this assists pupils in understanding the needs of those less fortunate. The vicar maintains strong links between the church and school, giving practical and prayerful support, which is valued and appreciated by the whole school family. Parents explained how distinctive Christian values are deeply rooted in the life of the school and spoke of the impact these have on their children.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Great value is placed upon worship being central to school life. It is well planned and effectively underpins and extends the school's deeply embedded Christian ethos. It also enhances pupils' understanding of the importance of taking responsibility for their conduct and actions. One pupil said, 'Worship and prayer helps us to follow a straight path.' During worship, pupils are challenged to think deeply about the messages being explored. As a result, they are enabled to create informed opinions. Bible stories and Christian teachings explored through worship, enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Pupils therefore think carefully about their actions. Their understanding of the Christian concept of the Trinity, however, is as yet not fully developed. Pupils learn from and enjoy the celebration of Christian festivals. Worship is varied and includes whole school and class led worship. There are also regular opportunities to worship in church. Staff and visitors lead worship on a regular basis. Consequently, pupils benefit from a wealth of varied opportunities, including different styles of worship. Prayer and reflection are regular features of all forms of worship and pupils say that during reflection and prayer time, they feel that they are actually talking to God. Prayers include the Lord's Prayer, lunchtime and home time prayers as well as prayers written by pupils which are shared in worship. The vicar holds weekly prayer meetings with a different class each week linked to the 'Big Question' being focused on that week. Pupils enjoy discussing issues that arise. The playing of appropriate peaceful music as pupils enter worship creates a calm welcoming atmosphere, which allows pupils to reflect and prepare themselves for worship. A table with a cross, Bible and candles provide a clear focal point. Messages from worship and a Christian blessing ensure that pupils are well prepared for the day ahead. During the worship observed in the inspection, the vicar told the story of Samuel involving pupils in a short drama. This encouraged everyone to reflect on the special work God has for each one of us. All staff participate in worship, which also supports pupils in developing their spiritual awareness. The school has effective procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of worship. Findings are then used to influence ongoing improvements to ensure that the spiritual needs of pupils are fully met. The Junior Faith Leaders group, made up of pupils from throughout the school, meets regularly to discuss RE and worship, including ways to improve worship. The school recognises, however, that pupils are not yet fully involved in the planning and evaluation of worship themes. Plans are in place to address this further. Parents and members of the local community are invited into school to share the class and weekly celebration worships as well as services held in church, thus strengthening links between school, church and the community. The school further strengthens its relationship with parents by sending out 'Talk Homework' in newsletters. Parents on the day of the inspection said how they valued this homework as it led to their children discussing worship themes at home with family members.

## **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Pupils are enthused by the stimulating and challenging, well planned RE curriculum. One pupil commented, 'It allows us to express our feelings and beliefs about God.' It has a very high profile and is extremely well led by a highly effective, knowledgeable subject leader who is passionate about the subject. She has made wise decisions about exactly where to focus support and training for staff, making sure that pupils develop the specific skills they need to do well in RE. She has developed and embedded a creative approach to learning where pupils have to think for themselves and reflect on their learning. Their thinking and enquiry skills are developed through thoughtful challenging questions. Pupils' knowledge deepens year by year because lessons build on what they have learned previously. Biblical teaching within collective worship constantly enriches this understanding. RE is further supported by the vicar's involvement in RE lessons. Good and outstanding teaching ensures that pupils are fully engaged and enjoy their learning. The vast majority of pupils make at least expected progress by the end of key stage 2 with attainment in both key stage 1 and 2 above that expected of pupils of a similar age. Every classroom has a 'wall of wonder' where pupils share their reflections about 'big questions'. These challenge and stimulate pupils' wider thinking. Marking is purposeful and effective. It encourages pupils to reflect on their work and points the way to further improvement. Effective monitoring through lesson observations, work scrutiny, pupil interviews, questionnaires and checks on planning are managed well. This ensures consistently high standards of teaching and learning in RE. Pupils have a good knowledge of the Bible, the life of Jesus and other major world faiths. There is a thorough assessment procedure and tracking system through the school that ensures outcomes and attainment in RE are in line with those in other subjects. Termly teacher progress meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher focus on achievement, including how well pupils are doing in RE. These meetings ensure teacher accountability for pupil progress in all year groups. RE makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, both through discrete RE lessons and the way in which RE is used as part of cross-curricular learning. Staff are involved in the evaluation of both RE and the promotion of gospel values. Their views are then used to further improve teaching and learning in school. Visits to places of worship also enhance pupils' appreciation and understanding of the beliefs and customs of faiths practiced in the area

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

The headteacher, through her strong personal Christian faith, articulates with commitment, a clear vision expressly rooted in Christian teaching. This informs all policy and practice in the school. The distinctive Christian character and vision for the school is shared, agreed and upheld by all members of the school community, who are fully aware of the school's core Christian values. The headteacher and the senior leadership team carry out their roles very effectively. They are extremely well supported by school staff and a highly effective governing body. The successful leadership is enhanced by the close working relationship with the vicar. As a result of this, the prayer, pastoral and other links between church and school are very effectively interwoven. There is a real sense of growing together in God's world. Leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the work of the school well, ensuring that church school issues are identified and addressed through improvement planning. They clearly articulate how Christian values impact upon the lives of pupils and on the whole life of the school. Governors have a regular involvement in the school's life and work through their visits and learning walks. This, together with the detailed information they receive on developments in RE and worship through regular reports from the headteacher ensures that they know the school well. There is also a nominated link governor who liaises with the RE and worship leaders. Strong relationships exist between the headteacher and staff, based on mutual trust and respect. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of what it means to lead a church school and carry out their roles extremely effectively. Potential future leaders of church schools are prepared well through a strong emphasis on supporting professional development. All staff are inducted well into what is expected of them in relation to promoting the Christian ethos of the school and feel that their ideas are listened to and valued. One teacher said, 'We help to lead the children on their spiritual journey. It's our journey as well.' The Junior Faith Leaders group provides opportunities for pupils to offer suggestions and all pupils know that their views are appreciated and valued. The school seeks parental views and invites them to complete parental questionnaires. Parents say the school listens to their views and they are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They feel that their children enjoy school, are happy, safe and nurtured. They attribute this to the strong Christ-centered ethos of the school. One parent summed up their feelings by saying, 'Our children have developed a respect for others, they are taught to be respectful'

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