

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

### Grindleton Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Sawley Road, Grindleton, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 4QS.

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Blackburn</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	8 June 2017
Date of last inspection	18 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VA 119686
Executive Headteacher	Paul Holden
Inspector's name and number	Anne B. Woodcock 445

#### School context

Grindleton is a very small school. It serves the villages of Sawley and Grindleton in the Ribble Valley, north east of Clitheroe. The vast majority of the 43 pupils are of White British heritage and they come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding for social disadvantage is lower than average. The school supports a lower than average proportion of pupils with additional needs. The school is in collaboration with Bolton-by-Bowland, a neighbouring church school. The executive headteacher, who has been in post since January 2017, is the headteacher of both schools. There was a change in the diocese responsible for the school approximately three years ago.

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

- The headteacher's resolute Christian commitment and vision has re-invigorated the school's distinctive Christian character. This is impacting strongly on all aspects of church school improvement.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes demonstrate their understanding and use of the school's established Christian values.
- The school's highly inclusive character secures positive relationships, based on Christian hope and love, which nurture and support pupils, enabling all to flourish and achieve.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that the monitoring of collective worship and Religious education (RE) by governors contributes fully to self-evaluation so that it more effectively supports continued improvement.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship so that they develop their understanding of the nature and purpose of Christian worship.
- Extend pupil's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith so that they can more fully appreciate it as a world-wide and diverse religion.

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

Well-established, implicitly understood Christian values are at the heart of the school. Visitors immediately sense the welcoming embrace of Christian love and compassion which actively supports all members of the school family. Christian values and Bible verses are prominently displayed. Pupils talk confidently about how they use Christian forgiveness and friendship within their relationships. 'We are all part of God's family. We behave really well. If we fall out we forgive each other like Jesus showed in his parables,' explained a Year 4 pupil. As a result, behaviour is excellent.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners. Attendance is very high because pupils enjoy and are excited by their learning. They strive to achieve the targets set for them by teachers who they trust and respect. The calm, purposeful working atmosphere provides a learning environment in which all pupils can flourish and grow personally and spiritually. The high levels of support and encouragement reflects the school's inclusive nature, which recognises each child as unique and aims to develop their God-given talents. This is recognised by parents, one of whom stated, 'The school goes beyond what we expected. Everyone is compassionate and accepting of each other.' Pupils with additional needs are very well-supported, enabling them to make good, sometimes rapid progress. All pupils make good progress from their starting points and levels of attainment are consistently above national averages.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good because it is well-promoted across the curriculum. Pupils are increasingly reflective, confident learners. They express their ideas creatively through art, prose and prayer. Displays reflect the high quality of the experiences provided. Pupils' use of the school's reflection spaces can be seen in their prayers and personal responses. These illustrate depth of thought and consideration of others. Pupils benefit from regular outdoor learning experiences, such as the recent River Ribble Trust brown trout project, which challenge and inspire. Such experiences enable pupils to explore God's creation and appreciate their responsibilities for its conservation. The wide range of extra-curricular activities provided effectively supports pupils' personal development. Pupils' understanding of diversity and difference is developed through their work in RE and topic themes. However, although they are fully aware of diverse faiths and global issues such as terrorism and refugees, they do not understand Christianity as a multi-cultural faith.

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

'Collective worship is very much part of our day,' stated a year 6 pupil. 'It is interesting and everyone is included.' Most pupils enjoy worship because it is often a participatory, joyful experience. Effective planning is firmly based on Christian values and Gospel teaching. As a result, pupils make good links between Jesus' teaching and Christian values. For example, a Year 6 pupil likened the school's enterprise week to the Parable of the Talents. Another talked about the Lost Sheep, stating that it shows God's love for everyone.

Pupils have a good knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus and of the celebration of major Christian festivals. 'Easter is God's victory over death and sin,' stated a Year 6 pupil, 'but most people think Christmas is more important because that is when God came to earth in human form.' Pupils understand God as a powerful creator and loving father. They are aware of the Christian concept of the Trinity and know that the Holy Spirit gave the disciples strength and courage to do Jesus' work.

Prayer is a prominent feature of the worship life of the school. Pupils of all ages write and use prayers confidently. Their prayers are displayed in books around the school so that they can be used at different times of the day. They demonstrate a good understanding of the purpose of prayer. For example, one Key Stage 2 pupil wrote, 'Make terrorists have kinder hearts. Let their minds be flooded with God's love.' A Key Stage 1 pupil wrote, 'Help us to be kind, thankful and forgive one another.' Pupils are familiar with traditional prayers and graces, such as the Lord's Prayer. They use traditional Anglican greetings and responses.

Older pupils have planned and led collective worship recently and all pupils are involved in delivering worship in church at festival times. However, at present they do not regularly take responsibility for planning, leading and evaluating worship independently. Links with the church have been maintained and extended, particularly through the 'link club' led by members of the church. The vicar leads worship in church and school. The church is used for weekly services throughout Lent. Parents value the opportunity to share in their children's work and worship so their attendance at church services and celebration worship is good.

Collective worship is monitored by staff. Some informal pupil feedback is used to inform planning and gain insight as to the impact worship is having on their thinking and attitudes. Although governors visit, their monitoring observations are not effective in supporting continued improvement because no formal record is kept. As a result, opportunities to gain accurate information as to the impact daily worship is having on pupils and staff are missed.

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

Pupils' attitudes to RE are positive because they enjoy and are increasingly challenged by their lessons. 'RE is mostly interesting and we want to join in the discussions about important questions. No one has ever said that they don't believe in God but it wouldn't matter as we respect everyone's opinions,' stated a Year 5 pupil. Changes in class organisation are having a very positive effect on pupils' achievement. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of all learners, using a range of activities which engage pupils and develop essential skills. Pupils are challenged to consider, investigate and reflect using art, poetry and extended writing. The high quality and pride taken in their work in RE is reflected in pupils' workbooks and imaginative displays seen around school. As a result, pupils make good progress in RE and the standards achieved are in line with other core subjects and national expectations.

RE has a high profile and provision meets all statutory regulations. It makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' SMSC development. The curriculum is well-balanced to ensure that pupils learn about and from religion. Through the study of major world faiths such as Judaism and Islam, pupils learn to appreciate similarities and differences. They talk knowledgeably about holy books and the different ways in which people pray. They make effective links between, for example, the Jewish festival on Pesach (Passover) and the Last Supper.

Assessment processes are in place and they continue to be refined in the light of curricular and other changes. They identify gaps in learning and track pupil progress. Marking is effective because it identifies some next steps in learning and affirms pupils' achievement. Routine monitoring and evaluation procedures involving senior leaders and governors are in place. However, at present they lack rigour so they do not help to raise standards. This is because feedback from observations, discussions and work scrutinies by governors and leaders do not effectively inform the process.

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

All members of the school community agree that the headteacher's Christian vision and drive is having a very positive impact on the school's Christian character and effectiveness. Although he has only been in post for a very short time, he has quickly established full reviews of the school's mission and vision statements, motto and core Christian values. Leaders have ensured that all members of the school family have been actively engaged in the process. As a result, all feel valued and included and, when completed, all will share and agree the vision and values. A pupil has designed the new logo so that it clearly reflects the school's Christian foundation and association with St. Ambrose church.

Since the last denominational inspection, the school's Christian distinctiveness has been maintained and developed. Leaders have secured highly effective leadership for RE and collective worship. Issues for development have been addressed, although the impact of changes has not been monitored robustly by governors. Governors have ensured that parental, staff and pupil views are valued and acknowledged within the regular pattern of school self-evaluation. Church school issues are included within whole school improvement planning. Governors manage challenging human and financial resource issues with Christian compassion, whilst always recognising that meeting the needs of all pupils is paramount. Many governors visit the school regularly, helping to run the church link club and supporting events. As a result, they know the pupils, staff and parents and are aware of the need for continual school improvement. However, the manner in which they record and use information gleaned from visits and shared observations is not consistent, so opportunities for improvement are missed.

Partnerships with the diocese and other local church schools support professional and curriculum development, teaching, learning and governance effectively. They contribute significantly to thorough strategic and succession planning. Links with schools in contrasting areas have been maintained, helping to support pupils' understanding of diversity and global issues. Pupils know that their contributions are valued, particularly in relation to charitable fundraising. They enjoy the activities they organise, happy in the knowledge that they are making a difference to peoples' lives and showing Christian love to those less fortunate.

It is clear that the school is extremely well placed to become an outstanding, highly effective church school.

SIAMS report June 2017 Grindleton Church of England Primary School, Grindleton, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 4QS