

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bretherton Endowed Church of England Primary School	
South Road, Bretherton, Leyland, Lancashire PR26 9AH	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	2 February 2018
Date of last inspection	December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided Primary 119461
Headteacher	Alison Moxham
Inspector's name and number	Susan Cliffe 832

School context

Bretherton Endowed Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school located in the village of Bretherton. The school has predominantly mixed age classes and has been oversubscribed over the past six years. The large majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals and with special educational needs is well below national. The head teacher and deputy headteacher have recently been appointed. The incumbent is also new to post since the last inspection after a period in which the school had no vicar.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bretherton Endowed Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and school leaders is rooted in Christian values. This impacts positively on the achievement of the pupils.
- Pupils are inspired by religious education (RE) and collective worship. This is due to the high quality of these areas and their place at the heart of the school.
- Pupils show exemplary behaviour due to the embedded explicit Christian values of respect, courage, humility, truthfulness, hope, friendship, compassion and thankfulness.
- The outstanding Christian character of the school nurtures the whole school community and permeates all aspects of the school's life.

Areas to improve

- Increase further the involvement of pupils in the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship.
- Develop more community links outside the local area to increase pupils' understanding of other cultures and faiths and Christianity as a world faith.

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

All of school life is underpinned by the mission statement, 'Learning together, growing together, achieving together, caring together within our Christian family'. The headteacher explained, 'Christian love is at the heart of this school.' The whole child is valued by the Christian school family. A parent wrote, 'School has made sure the values shine through each child.' The Christian values are spoken about by all stakeholders with a strong sense of ownership and understanding. The values are visible around school on displays such as the worship and welcome boards. They are also shared with parents and the community via newsletters. This ensures the high profile of the values and their importance within the school. Members of the school family say that these values lead directly to the excellent attendance, caring relationships and high achievement evident within school. National data shows that achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is above national standards. Pupils are extremely positive about their school. One of them shared, 'We are so grateful to come to this school. The values make a big difference.' The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the child is strongly supported by the Christian character of the school. It is enhanced by, for example, the peer mediators and buddy roles. The spirituality of the pupils and staff is nurtured through the faith week, dedicated reflection time, prayer and worship. It is also supported by the variety of clergy and visitors who visit the school. Behaviour is excellent and stakeholders feel that bullying is swiftly dealt with. The school supports many charities as such as Christian Aid, Water Aid and Rainbow House. This is perceived by pupils as their Christian duty. RE is seen as exciting by teachers and pupils and it underpins the Christian distinctiveness of the school. It contributes greatly to the strong SMSC development within the school. It inspires pupils to consider challenging questions. A pupil explained, 'We think a lot about big questions and teachers really listen to what we think.' The study of RE has ensured that pupils have increased their understanding of the diversity of the Christian faith and other faiths. This has increased their cultural awareness and respect for others especially through the recent faith week. A Year 6 pupil explained, 'I have never known anything like faith week. It taught me to understand why people live their lives differently. It was brilliant.' There are many multi-cultural and faith displays such as a world faith display in Class 1. The school is developing the pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith. A Year 6 pupil enthused, 'Christianity is found all over the world but more is in the western world.' However, this understanding is not, as yet, well embedded. Relationships between the clergy, village churches and the school are mutually supportive and strong. The pupils love visits from the governors and clergy and they enjoy visiting the churches in the village. Extra-curricular activities such as cooking, sewing, eco club, cricket and netball enrich provision and enhance social skills. A parent commented, 'This school is so nurturing.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The whole school community values the inspirational collective worship experience and this is reflected in the evaluations gathered. As stated in the collective worship policy, 'It places the day into God's hands'. Worship is rooted in the person of Jesus, Christian teachings, Anglican practice and the church year. The understanding of the Trinity is strengthened through specific prayers and the lighting of three candles. The school is further extending the pupils' knowledge and understanding of worship by introducing the Agape Eucharist services. This has enriched the older pupils' understanding of the Eucharist. Worship is firmly rooted in the school's Christian values and its delivery is varied. A range of clergy, children and staff lead worship. This prompted a child to explain, 'I love worship because it is always interesting with lots of visitors.' This rich experience is enhanced further by visits to the parish and Congregational churches in the village contributing to a feeling of Christian unity. Collective worship leads to the positive, caring relationships within the school and pupils' spiritual development is explicitly planned for and implemented across the curriculum. The Christian values at the heart of worship inspire the children to perform acts of charity. A Year 1 child wrote, 'We need money so that we can help other people.' Pupils respond well when given time to reflect across the school day and this supports their spiritual journey. There are many prompts for reflection often linked to the half-termly Christian value. Pupils make good use of the prayer tables in classes which instil an understanding of personal prayer. Weekly class worship, prayer afternoons and thought provoking displays are seen as a way to develop more spontaneous prayer amongst pupils. Their confidence has grown greatly in this respect. A Year 6 child enthused, 'We know that there are so many ways of praying and we love exploring these.' School leaders are keen to build upon developing prayer experiences through further development of the outdoor environment. Worship is well planned and the pupil ethos group is becoming increasingly involved in planning and delivery. They were key players in the planning of a moving remembrance service attended by the local community. The school is committed to embedding the involvement of the ethos group. The behaviour and conduct of pupils is outstanding during worship and this is noted by parents and governors. The vicar commented, 'The children are so respectful and attentive during worship. It's fantastic to see.' Evaluation of worship has become more rigorous since the last denominational inspection. Developments, such as a more varied use of hymns and alterations to the worship timetable, have been actioned in response to evaluations across the school community. Many parents attend Monday worship in school and services held at special times such as Christmas and harvest. A parent wrote in response to a Year 2 worship, 'It was amazing. It had me in tears. It was so moving.'

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The RE curriculum is rich, varied and is well taught. This leads to excellent pupil behaviour in lessons and love for the subject. The outstanding provision also impacts upon their ability to reflect upon challenging questions. 'I love challenging questions in RE. Teachers make it fun but you're still learning,' shared a Year 6 pupil. English, drama, art and design and technology enrich the provision. In Reception, for example, pupils were enjoying building houses like those that Jesus would have lived in. RE is a feature of high quality displays in classrooms and around the school, often interactive. Pupils have a thorough knowledge of the life of Jesus and the Bible and are keen to reflect upon the importance of each. In the display, 'Following in His footsteps', a pupil wrote, 'You should use the Bible as a guidebook that you can find answers to all your problems in'.

The RE leader is outstanding and her support for staff in their delivery of the subject to mixed-age classes is much appreciated by them. She uses her time effectively to monitor and evaluate practice and liaise with governors keeping them fully informed regarding RE developments. As a result, RE enjoys a very high profile within the school. It contributes greatly to the SMSC development of pupils. Work from the pupils illustrates how RE inspires reflection. For example, a pupil wrote, 'When I am forgiven I feel relieved.' Termly monitoring has informed school leaders that RE is delivered by staff with commitment, good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. The RE leader receives regular professional development and the school is kept constantly up to date through the strong links enjoyed with the diocese. This ensures that staff are well-informed and able to deliver high quality teaching. The school is also able to prepare for such changes as the implementation of the new RE syllabus for which they have been a pilot school. Effective assessment procedures are in place. These contribute greatly to the maintenance of the high standards within the subject. RE is well resourced showing its importance within the life of the school. A respect for cultural diversity has been strongly nurtured and is seen as a priority. A pupil wrote his thoughts, 'God and Jesus loves every single one of us no matter what our religion or colour is.' A diocesan inter-faith advisor supports the school. Visits from a practising Hindu, for example, are arranged to enrich the pupils' understanding of and respect for other faiths. This respect has been further strengthened by the recent pupil-planned faith week which explored major world faiths alongside Christianity. This prompted a parent to explain, 'The children came home with so much to share.' Following a visit to a mosque, the pupils are keen to further develop their experience of other faiths by visiting more places of worship.

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

The outstanding Christian leadership of the school has a clear vision founded upon distinctive Christian values. These are shared with all stakeholders who are able to express the positive impact the values have on the life of the school. The headteacher enthused, 'Values ensure that love of God is at the heart of our school.' These values nurture the excellent relationships found in the school. The strong leadership of the Christian headteacher ensures that the Christian vision for the school is at the core of school improvement. She is said to have re-energised the school's Christian distinctiveness. A governor commented, 'The headteacher has heightened the spirituality felt within school.' This reflects the success the school has had in addressing the areas for development from the last denominational inspection. These areas centred on the further nurturing of spirituality. The school leadership has embarked upon a review of the core Christian values and the mission statement involving the whole school family. Insightful self-evaluation by school leaders informs improvement. Part of this self-evaluation involves gathering the views of stakeholders and this leads to valuable and constructive improvements. A parent shared, 'Parents have a bigger voice. We feel part of the school extended family.' This feedback has led to change, for example, to the format of homework and the newsletter. As a result, the school community feels that their opinions are valued. Parents are very appreciative of how the school lives out its Christian mission. They attribute the excellent pupil behaviour to the school's Christian values. Well-being is an area for school development reflecting the school's commitment to the caring Christian nature of the school. A member of staff commented, 'Staff and pupils all feel nurtured.' Succession planning is well supported and effective with the development of middle leader roles. The Christian ethos of the school permeates the whole curriculum through focused planning by subject leaders. RE and worship are given high priority leading to the outstanding practice found in each. The school enjoys effective partnerships with stakeholders, other schools and communities. The school is seen as a community hub and hosts groups such as the Women's Institute and a toddler group. There are links with many local schools and schools in Darwen and Hoole. Links with the global community are underdeveloped, but there are growing links with a school in Pakistan and involvement in the 'Open Doors' project focusing on preventing persecution. Also, the school has strengthened global links through the sponsoring of an African child, the Samaritan's purse and sending clothes and shoes to Malawi. A strong relationship with local village churches has been established. This is reflected in the vicar's comment, 'We all support each other and worship together.' These links have flourished despite a period without an incumbent. The diocese is seen as a very supportive link, especially for the RE leader and the newly appointed head teacher. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is excellent.