

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Aughton Christ Church Church of England Primary School

Long Lane, Aughton, Ormskirk, L39 5AS

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Liverpool
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	23 June 2017
Date of last inspection	July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary. URN: 119370
Headteacher	David Kennedy
Inspector's name and number	Stephen Burrow 622

School context

Aughton Christ Church CE Primary School is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils come from a White British background and small number from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is high and above the national average. The strong, mutually supportive bond between the school and church has led to the achievement of Part One of the 'Church School Partnership Award.'

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Aughton Christ Church 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.
- Relationships are exceptional and promote a shared deeply embedded Christian ethos that underpins all the school does. Pupils are highly valued and nurtured as unique 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 (SMSC) development.
- Being part of the church family makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and the spiritual development of all members of the whole community.
- Christian symbols and vibrant and stimulating displays of pupils' work create a very positive, welcoming and supportive atmosphere for everyone involved with the school.

Areas to improve

- Develop extra ways of sharing the Christian values taught in school with parents and carers and involving them more in feedback related to this, so as to further improve evaluation of the school's Christian character.

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

The distinctive Christian character, underpinned by Christian values, is central to the ethos and vision of the school. This impacts on the daily lives of everyone. Strong, mutually nurturing and supportive relationships, rooted in the teaching of Jesus, are evident in every part of school life. Pupils feel safe, happy, valued and well cared for and have excellent adult role models. They are polite, courteous and respectful of all adults and of each other, displaying excellent behaviour. The curriculum is rich and varied, providing a wide range of experiences. As a result, pupils' achievement is outstanding with outcomes above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2.

The high profile of RE and collective worship contributes greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their outstanding SMSC development. Vibrant and stimulating displays lift the spirit. The large cross in the entrance area, surrounded by stones representing gospel values, has an immediate impact on visitors. The well utilised RE and reflection areas in all classrooms, the prayer corner, the 'Peaceful Pathway' and the developing reflection garden in the school grounds, provide opportunities throughout the day for pupils to think and quietly pray. This enables them to develop an understanding of the importance of prayer in their own lives. One pupil explained that prayer allows them, 'To be in touch with God' and added, 'He is in our hearts.' The way pupils are taught about other world faiths, in relation to Christianity, very effectively promotes pupils' acceptance of and respect for the views and beliefs of others.

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 vicar and curate have a high profile in school, giving practical and prayerful support, which is valued and appreciated by the whole school family. Because of the school's strong emphasis on caring for each other, pupils enjoy raising money for several charities. The school also have global links with a school in The Gambia and support 'Land for Life,' raising significant sums of money to support them. Pupils of the 'Work on Worship Group' (WOW) meet regularly to discuss and evaluate worship, RE and the school's promotion of gospel values. 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. One parent specifically stated this when they said that the school gives their children the opportunity, 'To develop a faith of their own.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Great value is placed upon worship being at the heart of school life. It effectively underpins and extends the school's well-embedded Christian ethos. It provides excellent opportunities to worship as a community, and share the Christian values that are central to the school. Collective worship is based firmly on Christian values, festivals, the Bible and the teachings of Jesus, which enhance pupils' SMSC development very effectively. In addition to the daily acts of collective worship each class has a time of quiet reflection and prayer each morning, including the lighting of a candle and a Christian greeting. This enables everyone to move forward into the new school day with inspiration. Learning about non-Christian religious festivals is enhanced by visits to other places of worship, including a Mosque, Buddhist Centre and Hindu Temple. This helps pupils to understand and respect the beliefs and practices of other world faiths. Discussion with pupils and evidence around school show that their understanding of the Trinity is well developed. One pupil explained, 'The Holy Spirit is inside us. God is all around us and Jesus is beside us.'

Worship themes are carefully planned and delivered. Staff lead worship on a regular basis and there are frequent opportunities to worship in church. The vicar and curate regularly lead worship in school, strengthening the bond between church and school. Parents and members of the local community are invited to share in pupil class led worship and at key Christian festivals in church. The church also organises an 'Easter Experience,' involving members of the church family, effectively underpinning and extending the school's deeply embedded Christian ethos. One pupil said about worship, 'It's a time to reflect on the candle in a moment of silence.' Everyone enters worship with a sense of expectation and reverence. The act of worship observed on the day of the inspection was led and planned by the pupils in the WOW Group who have benefitted from training led by 'Worship Warriors.' They led worship on the topic of Creation and caring for God's world, which provided excellent opportunities for reflection. Worship is enhanced by a worship table with a Bible, cross and candle, which create a reflective atmosphere. One pupil said, 'The candle reminds me that Jesus is the light of the world.' Worship is evaluated by staff, and pupils have opportunities to discuss and evaluate worship in their reflection books and through the WOW Group.

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

The highly effective leadership of the headteacher and his senior leaders provides an extremely clear vision of placing Christian values at the school's core, sustaining the powerful Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. This vision is understood and extremely well supported by everyone involved in the life of the school including governors and parents. It is lived out throughout the school day. The focus of the school is very much on ensuring that each pupil is given the opportunity to flourish and reach their full potential. However, not all parents and carers are fully aware of the Christian values on which all this work is based. There are plans in place to ensure that this is corrected, utilising discussions and feedback from parents and carers.

Governors are justly proud of their school and the rich Christian tradition associated with it. In discussion they confirmed that Christian values are being lived out in the school along with the core belief of our faith, that 'God loves each of us.' They support and challenge the school leadership team in all areas of school improvement, ensuring that church school issues are prioritised in improvement planning. The school has fully addressed the areas for development highlighted in the last inspection. Governors have a regular involvement in the life of the school 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.

The successful leadership is enhanced by the close working relationship with the church, as a result of which the prayer, pastoral and other links between church and school are very effectively interwoven. Strong relationships exist between the headteacher and staff, based on mutual trust and respect. Staff feel that their ideas are listened to and valued. One teacher said, 'We are proud of our school, it's like one big extended family.' 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.

The school council and WOW Group provide opportunities for pupils to offer suggestions and they know that their views are valued. There is a strong Parent Helpers Association (PHA) which actively supports the work of the school through social and fund raising events. Parents are very proud of the school and the impact of the Christian values on the lives of their children. They speak highly of the school's pastoral and all-embracing care of all pupils, accurately reflecting the inclusive nature and friendliness of everyone in school. One parent summed up the views of other parents by saying, 'The values are lived out and incorporated into everything.'

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