



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Barton St. Lawrence Church of England Primary School

Jepps Avenue
Barton
Preston PR3 5AS

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 9 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 2 March 2010

School's unique reference number: 119562

Headteacher: Julie Goodwin

Inspector's name and number: Maggie Eldridge Mrotzek

Quality assurance: Neville Norcross NS403

School context

The school is a smaller than average size Church of England voluntary aided primary school. Since the last inspection, the school has almost doubled the number of pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium grant is below average. The number of pupils who leave or join the school, other than at the normal times is greater than in most schools. The vast majority of pupils at the school are White British. The school has gained the Church School Distinctiveness award from Blackburn Diocese.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barton St Lawrence as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong Christian commitment and clear vision of the headteacher and assistant headteacher permeate the life of the school which allows a distinctive Christian ethos to develop.
- The well-established and effective links between the local church and the school enable the whole community to experience and benefit from a living and vibrant Christian faith.
- The imaginative way that prayer life is developed enables all members of the school community to deepen their spiritual awareness.

Area to improve

- Ensure that the Christian character and distinctiveness of the school remain a strategic focus in order that development planning and insightful self-evaluation give a clear indication of the school's performance and areas for further development

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

A passion for excellence together with distinctive Christian values ensures that every child makes outstanding progress. The Christian character of the school has a high profile and shapes the attitudes of the whole community. Exceptional relationships based on Christian compassion and trust enable everyone to feel valued and included. Values such as respect, friendship, reconciliation, forgiveness and hope are evident in artistic pupil displays throughout the building. The values are prominent on the weekly newsletter to parents and discussed regularly in collective worship. They make a significant impact on spiritual, moral social and cultural development and, in particular, the exemplary behaviour of the children. The school community regularly goes the extra mile to support families in need. Parents speak very highly of the way staff take time to show love and respect to meet the specific learning and behaviour needs of their children. Attendance figures are above national averages. This is because pupils want to attend school and be part of the 'family'. There have been no permanent exclusions. Christian values have made a significant impact on shaping relationships and lives of pupils.

The school provides a wide range of stimulating and engaging activities that are relevant to all pupils. As a result of this, pupils make good progress in both their academic achievement and their personal development. An example of this is the multi-cultural week, which enables parents and pupils to discuss issues from a variety of faith traditions. Bi-annually, all pupils visit different places of worship and most recently they visited a Mosque, enabling pupils to develop further respect for and understanding of cultural and religious diversity. Pupils learn how Easter in different cultures throughout the world is celebrated. Established links with the Guama school in Kenya allows pupils to understand the impact of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Religious education supports the strong Christian character and enables pupils to explain the Christian understanding that underpins their actions.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Prayer is transformational and developed in a variety of imaginative ways. Recently, a prayer space was set up which consisted of several gazebos. This provided space for 'time out' to consider the bigger questions in life. Pupils really enjoyed this time to reflect and talk to God. Pupils were impressed by the analogy of a visual image of bubbles taking the spirit of God throughout the world. Parents commented on how their children want to pray at home about concerns they are facing and to thank God for the good things they have. Pupils said they like to write prayers throughout the day because it 'calms you down when thinking about God'. Writing and saying prayers is part of daily experience and pupils' prayers are given importance when placed on prayer trees. Reflective interactive prayer areas are features of every classroom. In the reflection garden, the school community takes time to be still and to celebrate God's creation. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of how prayer is a central part of personal worship.

Collective worship is inspirational. It includes a variety of distinctively Christian themes and promotes an understanding of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and Bible stories. The worship is planned jointly by the headteacher and vicar. Engaging activities such as storytelling, music, movement, visual aids and prayers assist pupils in developing their own spiritual journeys. Pupils are given time to reflect in collective worship in order to consider what Jesus would do in a range of situations. Pupils in Year 2 were able to say that they should employ reconciliation when there have been arguments in order to help them to make friends again.

Pupils are actively involved and lead class worship regularly in the local church. They are very keen to take up the role of monitors including candle bearers/lighters, musicians and dramatists. Pupils take part regularly in evaluations of worship and this has led to changes in the way it is structured. Each week the incumbent comes into school to lead worship.

Pupils look forward to his visits and 'how he makes worship lively'. This enables pupils to feel engaged and to appreciate the relevance of worship in their daily lives. Worship takes place in a variety of settings including the local church where a half - termly Eucharist takes place. Other services at the local church, to which parents are also invited, include Harvest Festival, the Leavers' Service and Mothering Sunday. As many as 60 parents each week join the pupils' celebration worship in school. As a result, school worship is seen to be at the centre of community life.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The religious education (RE) coordinator is also the assistant headteacher and she very effectively monitors, plans and organises the RE curriculum to ensure good progress for all groups of pupils. Pupils' work indicates higher levels of attainment than what is expected for their age. Joint moderation regularly takes place by all teaching staff across year groups to ensure effective progression and accurate assessment. A portfolio of pupils' work demonstrates a wide variety of excellent analysis, evaluation and enquiry skills. The quality of teaching in RE is good overall and in some cases outstanding. As a result of this, standards are at least as good as those in other core subjects. Standards in RE are reported termly to parents and this demonstrates its prominence in school life. Staff have excellent subject knowledge and good relationships in the classroom enable the pupils to confidently ask questions and become resilient learners. Pupils are inspired by RE lessons and as a consequence parents say that pupils often come home with challenging questions. Displayed in each room are learning ladders with relevant words such as 'testament', 'gospel' and 'authority'. Pupils are encouraged to add notes to define the meaning of these words. These are regularly discussed in a way that leads to a deep understanding of theological concepts.

The RE curriculum is comprehensive, well-balanced and creative. Planned activities ensure that pupils are able to learn from religion as well as learning about religion. Visits take place to different places of worship. A recent multi-cultural week enabled pupils to make links between the beliefs, practices and values of different faith traditions. Pupils value RE because it makes them think about their own beliefs and values as well as those of others. In a Year 2 lesson pupils explained they had been learning about how a gangster had beaten up a person and that an 'enemy' had helped him. The pupil stated they would stop and help someone and 'we should love others as Jesus did'. Pupils clearly relate the relevance of RE to daily life. RE therefore makes a distinct impact on the spiritual, social, cultural and moral development of pupils.

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

The profound commitment of the headteacher and assistant headteacher ensure that a distinctive vision is deeply rooted in Christian values. The parents appreciate how the headteacher always has time for them and say she is both 'phenomenal' and 'amazing'. The governors rightly pointed out, 'the headteacher brings her Christian faith into the heart of the school'. There is a relentless drive by governors, leaders and staff to maintain consistently high expectations for all pupils regardless of their background. The governors' distinctive vision is that 'at its root is a desire to give pupils the opportunity to develop and engage in a relationship with God which will assist them in reaching their potential'. This vision is applied rigorously to the decision-making process. Governors are involved in the school's self-evaluation strategies. As a result they know the school well. However, whilst they are aware of the areas to improve, those relating to church school distinctiveness do not feature strongly in the school's development planning strategies. Governors ensure that the arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

All staff attend courses to develop their role as Christian leaders and whole staff training on church school distinctiveness has taken place. The interview process for new members of staff ensures that those appointed have a commitment to developing the school's Christian character. This has enabled all staff to play their full part in developing the school's distinctiveness.

There are excellent links with the local church and the whole community contributes fully to school life. This results in substantial benefits for both church and school. Parents and governors value the role played by the incumbent in the daily life of the school. The local church parishioners particularly enjoy the 'wonderful singing of the pupils' during their visits to church.

SIAMS report July 2015, Barton, St. Lawrence, Preston PR3 5AS