

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Canon Burrows Church of England Primary School

Oldham Road, Ashton under Lyne, Tameside, OL7 9ND

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Manchester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Tameside
Date/s of inspection	23 March 2017
Date of last inspection	June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary aided 106249
Headteacher	Suzanne Fildes
Inspector's name and number	Nigel Castledine 652

School context

This is a larger than average primary school, situated in a predominantly White British urban community.

The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disability are low. A small minority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Although it is increasing, the proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language remains below the national average.

The school holds many national awards, including the religious education Gold Quality Mark.

Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher and there have been significant changes to the senior leadership team and teaching staff.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Canon Burrows as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian distinctiveness, enriched by vibrant collective worship, permeates the whole of school life, and inspires the dedicated leadership team.
- Every pupil is valued as a child of God and therefore is regarded as a unique being of infinite worth.
- Pupils support the religious education (RE) of their peers as 'lead learners', and make clear, insightful links between their differing faiths, which emphasise the welcoming inclusiveness of the school.
- The Christian 'What if?' learning approach used in RE and across the school curriculum embeds a strong faith perspective into pupils' learning.
- Mutually supportive relationships, modelled by all the staff, ensure that pupils' enthusiastic learning attitudes accelerate their academic progress. This is further enhanced by the pupils' friendly, considerate behaviour which promotes respect and acceptance for all.

Areas to improve

- Revisit and refresh the chosen Christian values to ensure that both pupils and adults understand their source in the biblical teachings of Jesus, and their importance within school life.
- Further develop RE assessment procedures through teacher moderation, to enhance the consistency and accuracy of judgements on pupils' learning outcomes across the school.

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

This school's rich, pervasive Christian ethos supports every pupil to grow and flourish academically and spiritually. The mission statement reflects how the school's eighteen chosen Christian values provide the foundations of school life. Staff and pupils are inspired by them to strive for the highest standards and to have high aspirations for the future. However, due to the wide range of these Christian values, the meaning, significance and gospel teaching of some has become blurred and confused.

The school's focus on academic progress underpins high attainment and sustained pupil progress. From a broadly average starting point, by the end of Key Stage 2 almost all pupils are achieving in line with or exceeding national expectations. Differing needs and abilities are identified early and provision is matched accordingly, with swift action taken to secure necessary improvements. Because pupils enjoy their learning, they take a pride in their work, relishing the many opportunities for sharing outcomes with peers. Punctual attendance meets national expectations and instances of persistent absence are closely monitored and improvement sought.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the pupils is an important focus of the whole curriculum. Through the use of the 'What if?' approach to learning, the school promotes a Christian perspective that promotes pupils' understanding of the school's gospel values and faith ethos. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are extremely positive, stimulated by the challenges of developing spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Awe and wonder are woven into the school's curriculum with opportunities for pupils to question and reflect, particularly within RE. Respect for God's creation is clearly present in the learning approaches engendered by a section of the grounds that has been transformed into a tranquil and spiritual oasis of nature.

The school's Christian ethos fosters a learning environment of inclusive trust, fairness and respect for all. An older pupil commented, 'We welcome all faiths to this school.' Exemplary behaviour ensures the school remains a calm and happy place of learning. Pupils are keen to show Christian service in taking up the school's many opportunities to help and support others. Bullying is a rare occurrence and is dealt with swiftly and compassionately, reflecting the school's Christian values. Ongoing international links enrich pupils' spiritual development as well as their awareness of global issues. This has informed pupils' fundraising to alleviate international crisis. A school councillor explained, 'Jesus shared with everyone so we raise money to give away too.' Compassion and Christian stewardship are also evident in pupils' support for local and national charitable giving. The recent 'celebrating RE' week provided further inspirational opportunities for exploration of the rich multi-cultural diversity of global Christianity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Great value is placed on collective worship as a daily spiritual occasion for all present in which those of faith can connect with God. The liturgy is carefully chosen to motivate all to participate and respond as an individual, whether of faith or none. Acting on the development point from the last inspection, an altar table with its cross is used as a focal point for worship.

Worship themes, based on the Christian faith and linking to RE, are carefully planned by a senior member of staff. The school follows the Anglican liturgical calendar, reflecting its festivals and religious seasons. Whilst remaining predominantly Christian, worship also gives due mention to the other faiths of the school, to ensure an inclusivity of belief. Evaluations of impact are obtained from the range of those who attend school worship, and are analysed to inform future plans. Governors also attend school worship and provide monitoring and evaluation feedback.

In order to keep worship fresh and appealing, leaders of worship include the senior staff and class teachers, pupils, visiting speakers and the vicar, who also has a pastoral role in school. An innovative way of involving pupils in worship is a daily volunteer to take on the role of 'very important prayer writer'. This pupil devises a prayer focused on the worship theme of that day, which is read aloud as part of the liturgy. Varying groups of pupils of all ages also enjoy leading aspects of worship and assisting adult leaders. One younger child observed, 'I really like worship when it's children telling us about Jesus.' Arrival and departure from worship is accompanied by the enthusiastic singing of worship songs which creates a spiritual atmosphere of praise and a readiness to worship.

Anglican tradition is experienced through the liturgy which includes the use of the Lord's Prayer and the responses to the lighting of a special candle. Its three flames act as a reminder for Christians of the teaching of the Holy Trinity. Strong links with Christ Church, the school's parish church, also provide opportunities for pupils to experience Anglican worship traditions within a church setting. Parents and families of all faiths are keen to be present for such occasions, and they welcome similar opportunities in school. These open services unite the faiths and diversity of the local community in family worship. The church is also the setting for a joint annual celebratory service with the sister church primary school of the parish. Ecumenical links with the local Methodist church also enrich the pupils' experiences of other Christian denominations.

The importance of prayer and reflection in school life is demonstrated in the way the school day ends with a prayer of thanksgiving for the past day and a looking forward to the day to come. Each classroom has a prayer and

reflection space, and there are communal quiet areas inside and outside school. These sacred spaces are well used by pupils of all faiths or none, indicating the inclusive and respectful value of prayer and reflection within the school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Pupils are engaged and motivated by RE which, in common with the rest of the curriculum, includes the 'What if?' Christian approach to learning which encourages curiosity and engagement. The school was an early-pilot user of the 'Questful RE' syllabus, prior to its adoption by the diocese. This has reinvigorated the RE curriculum because of its rich opportunities for deep, creative learning about and from religion. Pupils acquire a multi-faceted knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths through the wide range of exciting and creative learning opportunities. This is exemplified by an RE lesson in which Year 5 pupils considered a religious painting via their analysis of the artist's use of colour, shape and symbolism to convey personal spirituality and beliefs. Pupils enjoy sharing their ideas and reflections from RE. They also use their RE skills to make sense of their personal beliefs, and to grow in understanding and respect for those whose beliefs contrast with their own. Pupils and staff members of contrasting faiths act as lead learners to great effect. They explain how their faiths impact on and are celebrated within their personal lives. To extend this learning, visits to the places of worship of differing faiths are also part of the RE curriculum. School worship and Christian values are both amplified by pupils' learning in RE which emphasises their connections with biblical teaching. One younger girl, with English as an additional language, connected her favourite Old Testament Bible story with the Christian value of humility. She explained, 'The story of the Tower of Babel is when people had just one language. But they wanted to build the tower high so they could be like God and that was wrong. Then God made them speak different languages so they couldn't work together.'

Pupils develop and apply a wide range of the higher-level learning skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection which inform their growing perceptions of the impact of personal faith. The school's internal data for attainment in RE indicates that standards reached by pupils at the end of each Key Stage are at least in line with or above those of other core subjects. However, because the RE assessment system is a recent development, procedures for assessment of pupil progress and attainment are not yet consistent through the school.

The school indicates its resolve that RE remains a key area of the curriculum by allocating a senior member of staff as subject leader. Her comprehensive monitoring schedule ensures sustained, outstanding provision so that RE is seen by many pupils as a highlight of their learning. The school is also able to influence teaching in other church schools because the subject leader is the diocesan RE teachers' hub co-ordinator for Tameside.

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

Gospel teachings are at the heart of the school's Christian vision for every pupil. Each child is seen as a uniquely precious individual made in the image of God and therefore to be provided with the highest standards of educational provision and care. To ensure these standards are maintained, the headteacher oversees a rigorous monitoring and evaluation cycle, planned strategically across the school year. This informs the school's self-evaluation and its development plan which are monitored by the governing board through ongoing scrutiny and regular school visits. Through these checks, the governors are able to verify that Christian distinctiveness continues to drive forward the school's exceptional academic standards and pupil nurture.

Pupil voice is clearly present in the work of the school council which has recently focused on teaching and learning, personal development, behaviour and welfare. Exemplary use is made of junior inspectors to gather pupil's insights on the effectiveness of the school. Their Ofsted-style findings confirm for example, that: 'The children show the Christian values of friendship, love, sharing and kindness towards each other.'

Strategic staff succession planning is in place at the school. Recent senior leader internal appointments have all been made possible by the emphasis on ensuring that all can reach their full potential within a Church of England school. Continuing professional development for all staff and governors is supported by the diocese through its hubs and learning networks, including the development of future leadership of church schools. There are also supportive links with local schools, the community and a mutually beneficial and very positive relationship with the local church.

The school's Christ-driven caring philosophy is mirrored in the other faiths of the community and the resulting warmth, respect and encouragement for all is welcomed by parents. One mother stated, 'The Christian love and kindness for all at Canon Burrows makes my children's education a very happy and positive experience.' Involving parents as partners in supporting their child's education is seen as crucial to the success of the pupils. Christian values are clear in the strong emphasis on an open door approach and working with families. A wide range of information to support the pupils' education and to explain the school's gospel-driven philosophy is made available to parents through newsletters, the internet and social media.

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