

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Latchford St. James Church of England Primary School

Old Road, Warrington WA4 1AP

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Diocese

Chester

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Warrington

Date of inspection

25 January 2018

Date of last inspection

November 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary aided 132247

Headteacher

Martin Flute

Inspector's name and number

Jean Forward 625

School context

Latchford St. James is below average in size with nursery provision and is situated to the south of Warrington town centre. The percentage of pupils from the Black and Minority Ethnic population is high for the area and a number of pupils speak English as a second language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with additional needs is below average. At the end of KS2 in 2017, pupils made above average progress in writing and average progress in reading and maths. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Latchford St. James as a Church of England school are good

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and his clear vision for the future development of the school ensure that the school's Christian distinctiveness and ethos are at its heart.
- The school creates a loving, secure and inclusive environment rooted in Christian values. This has a direct influence on pupils' well-being, progress and positive attitudes to learning.
- Relationships throughout the school community are strong and rooted in Christian care and respect. As a result, everyone feels valued and welcome.
- Worship has a central place in the life of the school. Christian values are promoted through biblical teaching and this has a positive influence on the spiritual development of the whole school family.
- The governing body provides effective support and challenge through commitment and expertise. This results in strong Christian leadership and confident self-evaluation of church school distinctiveness.

Areas to improve

- Develop clear systems for the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment in religious education (RE) in the light of the new syllabus. This will ensure that pupils' attainment and progress are tracked consistently and accurately to inform future learning.
- Review and formalise the planning for collective worship in order to ensure that pupils' have a clearer understanding of the Christian calendar, including seasons, festivals and major saints' days.

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

The school's motto, 'With each small step, the Lord guides me to be the best I can be', is the driving force of its Christian vision and purpose. High expectations and encouragement are directly linked to the Christian life experienced by all members of this faith community. The headteacher says that the school is motivated by a desire to 'help every child to live life in all its fullness'. Patience and understanding underpin all relationships and ensure that each individual is valued and supported. All members of the community know they are important and the ethos of Christian love and hope is clearly evident. Pupils talk confidently about the ways in which Christian values help them in their daily lives. A Year 6 pupil said, 'We need Christian values to show us how to treat others. Jesus teaches us this.' As a result, the positive relationships across the community are rooted in a Christ-centred approach. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development is strong. They have access to a wide range of enrichment activities and trips which broaden their experience and develop teamwork and social skills. Pupils enjoy being members of the school council and ethos group and demonstrate a true sense of responsibility in these roles. As a Forest School and Eco-school, there is a determination to support pupils in their understanding of God's creation and the responsibility everyone has to guard and care for the world. Pupils' ideas and opinions are valued and this leads to raised self-esteem and a desire to contribute to the harmony of the community. Pupils demonstrate Christian respect and concern for others in and beyond the school. This can be seen through a strong commitment to Christian stewardship, supporting a range of charities including Children in Need and a local hospice. Through a close link with a local care home, Reception pupils have the opportunity to spend time on craft activities with the elderly. This creates a true sense of love and understanding for the needs of the community. Pupils recognise the importance of showing generosity and compassion for those in need and understand that this is directly linked to the teaching of Jesus. Pupils feel able to share their concerns with staff knowing that these will be addressed in a sensitive way. A Y6 pupil said, 'Our teachers are dedicated and they always help us when we are struggling.' Pupils are happy and enthusiastic about learning and school life. This is affirmed by parents who say that the school's core Christian values have a positive influence on their children's behaviour, attitude to others and desire to learn. Parents believe that the support they and their children receive is directly linked to the distinctive Christian ethos of the school. Displays, Christian symbols and artefacts around the building emphasise the school's Christian character and develop the pupils' spiritual awareness extremely well. Pupils value the classroom reflection areas and are able to explain that these support them spiritually and are an aid to prayer. The school's commitment to widening pupils' knowledge of non-Christian faiths contributes well to cultural knowledge and to positive attitudes. Links with schools in Spain and Africa give pupils a wider outlook and a knowledge of Christianity as a worldwide faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

All members of the school community recognise the importance of collective worship and the central part it plays in the life of the school. Every day, the cross from each classroom is brought into the hall to be placed on the altar in order to strengthen the sense of gathering and then sending out to do God's work. Pupils enjoy worship and participate enthusiastically. They say how much they enjoy singing and contributing through role play, prayers and reading. Members of the ethos group are confident to lead worship in school and in church. Acts of worship follow a clear pattern which gives the children a sense of liturgical structure and familiarity. Worship themes provide pupils with understanding of biblical teaching of Christian values. Major festivals are also included and are often celebrated in the church. Parents say they value the opportunity to share in these special occasions and in the weekly family worship when pupils' achievements are celebrated. Planning would benefit from a more formal approach and a greater emphasis on the Christian seasons and saints' days. Pupils experience whole school and class worship which is led by members of staff, the church community and other visitors. The associate priest at St. James church regularly celebrates the Eucharist. Older pupils are encouraged to present themselves for confirmation, demonstrating their commitment to a life of faith. The pupils enjoy these varied worship experiences which broaden their understanding of Anglican tradition. Prayer and reflection have a central role in all worship and pupils understand that it is a way of talking to God. Their understanding of the meaning and purpose of prayer is further developed in class worship. A reflection based on the focus Christian value is used to explore ideas and extend pupils' understanding. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is carried out by all members of the school community, including members of the ethos group. This ensures that ideas are shared and development is relevant.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The school has a commitment to the on-going development of all aspects of teaching and learning in RE and is currently introducing the new diocesan syllabus. Staff have started to work together to explore the common theme before teaching each unit. In this way, teachers' knowledge and understanding is shared and developed and Christian values are explored as an essential element of the unit content. RE is seen as spiritual nourishment and is

a vital part of the school's approach to developing the whole child. Teaching is consistently good and standards are generally comparable to those in other core subjects. Teachers are well-supported by the headteacher who is the subject leader. The school has a range of resources to enhance teaching and learning. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of all learners, using varied, creative and differentiated activities. These engage pupils and develop essential understanding and skills. Pupils are challenged to consider, investigate and reflect. They experience art, drama and a range of writing activities. There is a clear balance between learning about religion and opportunities for pupils to explore their learning at a deeper level. For the most part, marking supports pupils' learning and it includes challenging questions which encourage them to think at greater depth. Pupils are enthusiastic and say that they enjoy RE. A pupil commented, 'It is important to learn about God and Jesus and we can tell others about what we learn.' Evidence of prior learning was demonstrated in the Reception class when pupils contributed to a discussion about Jesus's arrival in Jerusalem. Role play and other related activities were included in continuous provision and pupils showed great independence as they tackled the tasks. All pupils respond enthusiastically when asked to share their ideas and answer more challenging questions. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were exploring the story of Rama and Sita. The collaborative discussion and the sharing of ideas and opinions made a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of the story and its importance to Hindus. Pupils say that they enjoy opportunities to learn about non-Christian faiths in RE lessons and during Faith Week. This approach ensures that pupils have a wide understanding of the beliefs and practices of a number of faiths. Changes to assessment in line with the syllabus recommendations are in the early stages of development. Monitoring and evaluation exercises are carried out to ensure teaching and learning is consistent and appropriate.

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

The headteacher brings inspirational leadership based on integrity and personal spirituality. He is supported by a dedicated deputy headteacher, strong middle leaders and committed governors. Together, they promote a clear and strong vision for the school based on Christian principles and values. Self-evaluation is perceptive and has led to change and development in all aspects of the school's work. Staff are committed to fostering all areas of pupils' development and well-being through Christian care and nurture. In doing so, they are creating a Christian ethos which supports effective learning and equal opportunities. The school knows its pupils and their families extremely well and meets individual needs through a culture of unconditional Christian love and support, putting faith into social action. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian character of the school and believe that it fosters strong links between home and school and creates a sense of family. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the daily life of the school and they contribute in many ways. This strengthens the partnership between home and school. They say that communication is excellent and that all members of staff are approachable and helpful. Members of the governing body ask informed questions and provide a good level of challenge for the senior leadership team. This ensures that matters of school improvement are constantly to the fore. Action plans for church school distinctiveness are included in the school's development planning and are reviewed by the governors. These plans recognise the progress that has been made recently and set challenging targets and strategies for further improvement. Foundation governors are actively involved in the daily life of the school, contributing to classroom activities and the weekly Jesus and Me club. The school's Christian ethos draws together every element of leadership and management in order to raise aspirations. The well-established relationship between the school and church is extremely positive and contributes to the life of the Latchford community. A strong partnership with the diocese through discussion and training has contributed to the development of many areas of church school distinctiveness. The school is keen to enhance Christian leadership and management through continuing professional development for all staff and governors. Staff speak of the positive way in which their professional development needs are met. Christian care for and commitment to every member of the school family secure these extremely encouraging outcomes.