

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St. Peter's Church of England School

Thurstaton Road, Wirral.

CH60 4SA

Diocese: Chester

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Local authority: Wirral

Dates of inspection: 1st October 2015

Date of last inspection: 14th April 2010

School's unique reference number: 105079

Headteacher: Chris Penn

Inspector's name and number: Christine J Buckley 525

School context

The school is a larger than average primary school with an admission number of 45. Foundation stage is taught separately in two classes but all other children are grouped vertically in mixed age classes. It is a popular primary school and many families choose the school because of its church status. Most children come from socially advantaged families with few families from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of children with special needs and/or eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Peter's as a Church of England school are good

- A strong Christian ethos, with excellent relationships enables children to be nurtured and supported in the whole of their development.
- The well-established strong links between the church and school are mutually beneficial and make a significant contribution to the spiritual development of the children.
- The example of the headteacher, staff and governors in living out their faith provides the children with good role models that they emulate.

Areas to improve

- To explain and embed an understanding for all stakeholders that the motto 'Caring for all; Committed to excellence' is based on God's love in Jesus Christ is based on the Christian belief that God loves everyone as illustrated in the life of Jesus Christ.
- To develop more opportunities for children to plan and lead worship.
- Ensure that the self-evaluation process covering all aspects of what makes a church school distinctive is embedded in the calendar so that all stakeholders are able to take part.

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

St. Peter's Church of England Primary School has a distinctive Christian character that is not only evident in the beautiful environment but in the tangible Christian ethos. The school has displays that promote the Christian message and provide the school community with inspiration and challenge. These displays can be found throughout the school including the headteacher's room and range from Bible verses, to wonderful art work based on a Biblical theme and to children's thoughts. One child in Year three had written, next to a woven cross, that it reminds her 'of God the Father and how Jesus listened to Him'; another older child had written that 'the cross reminds him of forgiveness because Jesus had died on the cross to forgive our sins'. These comments reflect the spiritual understanding and journey that is encouraged in school. Children and staff are challenged to think about the big questions of life and one such question posed on a display board was 'If God provides for all, why are some people without? What can we do about it?' Such questions help the school community to relate the Christian faith to everyday life. Links with Uganda and Melanesia help children in understanding that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. Children speak of their respect and care for one another and the need to be able to say sorry and also to forgive. They speak of their ability to do so because of the example and help of Jesus. Children express their freedom to talk to staff and that they feel valued. Their voice is heard through different groups that include school council, eco group and the newly formed ethos group. The ethos group formed six months ago did an audit of the environment and noted that the dining area had no Christian symbols and displays and as a result is changing this. Children have similarly shown initiative in helping others less fortunate than themselves and reaching out to sections of the community. One such group put their faith into action as they went to a local nursing home and sat with the residents whose spirits were lifted by their visit. All children in school make good or better progress and attainment at the end of year 6 is above national level. The Christian ethos that everyone is special encourages every child to be the best they can be. This is achieved through the individual tracking of children and appropriate intervention systems. Religious education is important in the lives of the children and positively supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship (CW) is recognisably Christian and holds an important place in the school where all the community can meet together. Underlying the practice is a policy which makes clear the difference between an assembly and collective worship and this is seen at the end of worship when a candle is extinguished and then notices may be given. Planning is done in conjunction with the clergy and provides a framework that enables the children to have a knowledge and understanding of God, the Trinity and major Christian festivals. This was demonstrated in the responses of children during an act of CW. Each class brings a cross from their reflection area to provide a focal point for worship and give continuity between what happens in CW and in the classroom. The hall is conducive to worship as the children have worked with an artist to provide a backdrop with a large cross and have murals reflecting Christian truths. Children and staff engage enthusiastically with the singing and parents say that some of their children find the songs on YouTube and sing along to them at home. This indicates the desire to continue praising God when they are out of school. Each act of CW has some biblical content, with children often reading the Bible, prayer and time for reflection where everyone is encouraged to put their faith into action. Children happily share their prayers in worship and take advantage of other opportunities to pray and write prayers in their classrooms. They are able to write prayers that no-one will read and some find this very helpful and supportive in developing their relationship with God. Other children speak of praying at home each night even when this isn't the custom of their family showing the impact of CW upon the lives of individual children. The community engages well with the leaders during CW showing interest and an expectation that the message will impact on their lives. There is also a continuity of purpose from church to school as one young child who has just begun school told her parent that she has 'engage kids' at school too'. This working together supports the spiritual development of the children. The children know and use The Lord's Prayer regularly but there is no use of liturgy to aid their understanding of the Anglican tradition. Some

evaluation of worship takes place by the children. This was an area for development from the last inspection. However, the feedback from these evaluations is not used effectively to improve CW. Another area for development from the last inspection was to provide more opportunities for children to plan and lead worship but opportunities are still limited.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Children make good progress in religious education (RE) throughout the school. Teaching and learning is mostly good and attainment in RE is at or above national expectations. During the past eighteen months the school has a revised religious education policy (RE) and a newly written scheme of work. The new scheme of work which majors on key concepts and the development of enquiry skills have given more time for reflection on personal responses and not just gaining knowledge. This has had a huge impact on the quality of learning as there is more time for discussion and to consider topics in greater depth. As a consequence children are more able to demonstrate their competence in RE. Planning for lessons is thorough and adapted to the understanding and abilities of the children. Children are actively engaged and relate new understanding to their own spiritual development. An example of this was when Year five and six children were looking at what influences people of other faiths and considered influences in their own lives. Many children stated that their faith and friendship with Jesus was a major factor in helping to support and encourage their actions and future prospects. This demonstrates that RE supports the understanding of faith. The new RE leader and former leader are working together for a smooth transition and staff have formed RE teams to support one another and provide good quality teaching. The last inspection stated the need for the development of assessment and this has been addressed. Assessment is used to monitor and identify strengths and areas of development so that appropriate intervention is put in place and there is continual improvement. RE has a high profile in school and sufficient time is allocated to this area of the curriculum.

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

Effective Christian leadership from staff and governors promotes this school as a Christian school. Founded upon Christian teaching that every child is special and has God given potential, the leadership is committed to ensuring that all children achieve their best in every aspect of their lives. This is evidenced by celebrating all success from team sports to individual achievements in music and by monitoring attainment and progress and using interventions as necessary. An example of this is joint classes with another school to challenge the more able children in year six. Since the last inspection all stakeholders have been involved in formulating a new vision statement that makes explicit the Christian foundation of the school but it is not well known by the majority of the community. The leadership creates a distinctive Christian ethos, models Christian values and exemplifies faith in action. One example of this is through the link with Uganda where staff and governors have visited the link schools and helped in practical ways as well as taking letters and gifts from the children. This has inspired the children to think of different ways in which they can make a difference. Children who have now left the school have later visited Uganda with the youth group from church. These links therefore have a lasting impact on children's lives and demonstrates the strong links between the church and school that are mutually beneficial. Parents speak very highly of the staff of the school and the care and help that their children receive even when there are difficulties to overcome. Parents are very supportive in helping in school, providing activities for new parents and in raising funds. The newly formed ethos group has staff and governors working with children and has considered the Christian distinctiveness of the school. However, there are currently no opportunities for all stakeholders to evaluate the extent to which being a church school makes a difference to its effectiveness. The governing body has undergone a number of changes recently and is re-structuring so that individual members have more specific involvement in school as critical friends. The school benefits from links with the Diocese. Through the network of church schools they provide and receive support and challenge. The RE and CW leaders are supported by the leadership and governors. When vacancies arise in school the governors prioritise the need to support the Christian status.

SIAMS report October 2015 St. Peter's Church of England Primary School, CH60 4SA