



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Mary's (Deane) Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Edale Road,
Bolton
Lancashire
BL3 4QP

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Bolton

Date of inspection: 17th September 2015

Date of last inspection: June 2010

School's unique reference number: 105203

Headteacher: Diane Jeffries

Inspector's name and number: Stephen Burrow 622

School context

St Mary's is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. This includes New Commonwealth, Polish and other Eastern European children. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is significantly higher than the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Pupils' exceptionally good behaviour and attitudes are closely attributed to their understanding of the school's core Christian values, the 'Character Matters'.
- Children are highly valued and nurtured as individuals in a caring Christian environment, enabling them to grow academically, spiritually and socially.
- The whole school community is very reflective, respectful of diversity and the views of others.
- Strong, purposeful Christian leadership and the pursuit of excellence secures high levels of

personal development for all members of the school family.

Areas to improve

- Establish strategies for pupils to play a part in the planning of worship themes to further enhance their involvement.
- Establish evaluation procedures of worship that involve the views of all stakeholders in order to ensure worship opportunities have the most positive impact on all members of the school community.

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

The distinctive Christian character is evident in all areas of school life and is central to the ethos and vision. Christian values are explicitly expressed and deeply embedded. This is due to the school's emphasis on the teaching of Christian values through their 'Character Matters programme'. All members of the school family understand, freely articulate and embrace these values which are at the core of the school's Christian vision, permeating all aspects of school life. As a result, strong mutually nurturing and supportive relationships exist throughout the school with excellent pupil behaviour. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Adults provide excellent role models, displaying Christian values which are mirrored by the pupils. Consequently pupils feel safe, happy, valued and cared for. Teachers know each child as a unique individual and ensure that their academic and personal needs are fully met. The high profile of religious education (RE) within the school makes a significant contribution its Christian character. Pupils are challenged to extend their thinking, sharing their ideas openly. There is a very good balance achieved between learning about and learning from religion. Well utilised reflection areas in all classrooms and around the school provide opportunities for pupils to think and quietly pray. This makes a very significant contribution towards their spiritual development. The school's curriculum is rich and varied, providing a wide range of experiences. These contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's distinctive Christian ethos supports this well. As a result of the care and nurture received, pupils are supported extremely well in their learning and personal development. This encourages them to strive to meet the high expectations and challenges set by their teachers. The school is working very hard to improve attendance as demonstrated via their website and letters to parents which point out that attendance is an area for development. Parents are asked and challenged to support the school to achieve a higher percentage of attendance. They encourage parents to make sure their children attend school and do not take holidays in school time. Pupils leave St Mary's school as well-adjusted, happy and caring individuals who have been well prepared for the next stage in their education. They treat each other and all adults with great respect and care, celebrating diversity and difference. Their knowledge and understanding of each other's faiths is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the Christian faith and Gospel values because of the way the Vision Statement is lived out in daily life. The schools' strong emphasis on caring for others leads pupils to raise money for charities such as 'Comic Relief.' Learning from this assists pupils in understanding the needs of those less fortunate. Parents appreciate the school's affirmation of expressions of faith through the school's Christian character, values and RE. Displays around the school are stimulating. They lift the spirit and provide both reflection and discussion opportunities, which contribute to a deep spiritual understanding of Christian life. The vicar maintains strong links between the church and school. He gives practical and prayerful support, which is valued and appreciated by the whole school family.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is central to the life of the school and is very inclusive with pupils of all faiths attending. The pupils clearly enjoy the experience of worship, which makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The differing needs of pupils are met through whole school, key stage and class worship together with opportunities to worship in church. Pupils benefit from a range of styles of worship with the vicar, curate, staff and visitors leading worship on a regular basis. A commitment to quiet reflection has enabled pupils to internalise their experiences, and one remarked that reflection time enabled him to be a better kind of person. On the inspection day, worship on the theme of 'Respect' was enhanced by a worship table with a cross and candle. Year 6 pupils took responsibility for the music and slideshow presentation, which created a reverent and reflective atmosphere. Pupils entered and left quietly, utilising the opportunity to reflect on the messages displayed on the large screen. All staff join in worship and support pupils in developing their spiritual awareness. Prayer, silence and reflection time all contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual development which is central to the Christian ethos of the school. Although worship is firmly based on Christian values, world faith festivals such as Divali and Eid are also celebrated so that pupils gain an understanding of and respect for other world faiths. Pupils focus on and understand Christian values well because of the content of worship, which has a significant impact on their excellent behaviour and manners. This is further enhanced by the RE teaching. There is also a tree in the hall where pupils have their 'acts of random kindness' shared for others to reflect on. Worship is well prepared and thoughtfully presented with good records kept. There is, however, an untapped opportunity to involve pupils more in the planning of worship. Evaluations are informal, through discussion and reflection but there needs to be a more formal method of gathering the evaluative comments of all stakeholders to enhance future planning. Pupils' understanding of the Trinity is not yet well developed.

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

The headteacher, through her strong personal Christian faith, articulates with commitment and passion, a strong vision, which is explicitly rooted in Christian values. This vision is understood and shared by the school's senior leaders, staff and governors who inspire and support all members of the school family. The school's focus on shared core Christian values, the 'Character Matters,' are lived out daily. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of what it means to lead a church school and carry out their roles highly effectively. Potential future leaders of church schools are prepared well through a strong emphasis on supporting professional development in Christian leadership. All staff are inducted well into what is expected of them in relation to promoting the Christian ethos of the school. This leads to a strong focus on meeting the needs of the individual child through a well-developed and effective self-evaluation process which actively involves all members of the school community. As a result, the school has a very accurate knowledge of the impact its Christian character has on the pupils. The school's determined approach to inclusion and diversity ensures that all pupils are valued and encouraged, putting the school at the heart of the diverse community it serves. Governors challenge and support the work of the school effectively. They are actively involved in monitoring and evaluation. Pupils are confident that their voice is heard with their ideas and opinions valued and acted upon as part of the school's decision-making processes. Parents are very supportive of the school and say the school listens to their views. They also say that their children enjoy school and are happy, safe and nurtured within a caring Christian environment. They agree that the school's Christian ethos is a prominent aspect of school life that encourages their children to explore the meaning of faith and belief. The school works hard to involve parents and keeps them informed with a number of well planned parent workshops. This encourages the forging and sustaining of strong links with parents and local community. On the day of the inspection one parent explained how school offers significant support saying, 'The school doesn't just help the children it helps the families as well.'

SIAMS report, September 2015, St Mary's CofE VC Primary School, Bolton, BL3 4QP