

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Silverdale St. John's Church of England Primary School	
Emesgate Lane, Silverdale, Lancashire, LA5 0RF	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	25 May 2017
Date of last inspection	March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 119541
Headteacher	Katie Walsh
Inspector's name and number	Mark Hamblett 864

School context

Silverdale St. John's primary school is smaller than average with 85 pupils on roll. It serves an area of outstanding natural beauty in North-West Lancashire. The vast majority of pupils are White British with the percentage from minority ethnic groups being below average. The percentage for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is below the national average as is the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There have been two changes of headteacher since the previous denominational inspection, the most recent of which has been in post since January 2017.

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

- Relationships in this happy school are excellent and promote a shared Christian vision for learning.
- The clearly expressed Christian vision of the inspirational headteacher and governors is strongly supported by all members of the school family.
- The excellent care, nurture and guidance of all pupils and their families demonstrate the distinct Christian ethos of the school.
- Very positive, supportive relationships with the church and local community have a significant impact on the school's Christian character and on pupils' personal development.

Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship on a regular basis so that their insights feed into ongoing developments.
- Improve opportunities for spontaneous prayer and using pupils' prayers more effectively across the worship programme to complement and extend the good practice already in evidence.
- Ensure regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of religious education (RE) and collective worship by senior leaders and governors in order to drive future improvements.

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

The school's motto, 'Inspiring success through learning, community and faith' is precise, accurate and evident on all documents and communication. It is articulated and embraced by all members of the school community and plainly encapsulates the Christian vision of the headteacher and governors. The wellbeing of pupils and staff is central to school life. This leads to a happy and supportive atmosphere which clearly expresses the Christian values that are at its heart. Pupils understand the Christian beliefs and teaching which underpin these values. As a parent reflected, 'I specifically chose this school because of the distinct Christian ethos, where my child would learn Christian values in a safe, caring environment'. The school's Christian character makes a significant impact on attendance because pupils evidently enjoy being in this loving and supportive environment. They understand the relevance of RE and collective worship and their importance in a church school. One pupil commented, 'I love being at this school, we are taught loads of Bible stories and you know you're going to be looked after'. Year 5 and 6 pupils demonstrate maturity, confidence and a very good knowledge of each class's reflection area. They are keen to express their class's favourite Bible verse, John 3:16. They can articulately explain the impact this had on all pupils in the class, stating 'If you believe in Jesus, anything is possible, just look what Jesus did for us, we owe it him to do our best'. All pupils are incredibly proud of their school knowing that expectations of their behaviour and learning are high. Older pupils readily support their younger peers and there is excellent behaviour both when learning and playing which exemplifies the school's Christian ethos well. Excellent relationships also demonstrate its distinctively Christian character. Visitors are made to feel very welcome and pupils are polite and courteous. Pupils are encouraged to show concern for world issues as part of the school's Christian service, for example, by supporting the international 'Toilet Twinning' project.

Pupils respond well to the good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provided through worship, in RE and more widely across the school. Pupils' understanding and knowledge of difference and diversity both locally and world-wide is developing well, aided by good quality RE. An older pupil commented that learning about other faiths is important 'so we can understand their beliefs and respect them'.

Assessment information is well analysed by school leaders who rightly ensure that intervention strategies put in place to support pupils have the desired effect. Pupils who begin school in the Nursery or Reception class have starting points typical of national averages and rates of progress throughout the school are good. This leads to above average outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Rich and varied collective worship is a central feature of school life. It is valued and enjoyed by all members of the school community, including parents and governors. Pupils express how worship helps them in daily life, such as when dealing with problems and friendships by asking 'What would Jesus do?'. Pupils have a deep understanding of the centrality of Jesus for Christians. Older pupils demonstrate an awareness of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, explaining that a candle to represent each is lit at the start of daily worship. Worship is well planned and has a clear influence on the school day. The messages and 'big questions' addressed impact positively on the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils. They also provide relevant opportunities for pupils to contemplate and reflect on issues of spiritual and moral concern. Hence they deepen pupils' personal spirituality. Worship is planned to cover relevant Christian themes, values and important Christian festivals. The Bible is referred to regularly in worship and pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of its importance for Christians. The evaluation of worship is mainly carried out by the staff member who leads the programme. There is evidence that this is used to make improvements to worship. Whilst monitoring and evaluation has improved since the previous denominational inspection, systems are informal and do not involve a wide enough spectrum of adults and pupils: likewise opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship is very limited. The vicar plays an integral role in the worship of the school community. He leads worship on a weekly basis in the school and the pupils are regular visitors to the church. This serves to strengthen the mutually-beneficial relationship between church and school. It also enables pupils to have a good understanding of the nature of worship, the Christian faith and Anglican traditions and practices. Pupils show great respect during worship, which they recognise its importance as expressed through their responses and enthusiastic involvement.

Prayer is a key and integral feature of the school's worship life. Traditional prayers, including the Lord's Prayer and Grace, form a regular part of worship, as do well-known responses from the Anglican prayer book. Some pupils write their own prayers, displayed in class books. These reflect a growing understanding of the value and use of prayer, as demonstrated when one younger pupil said, 'Prayers reminds me that God is always there, even when you're playing outside you can pray'. Pupils are able to explain how they

frequently visit 'stations' around the school to offer personal prayer. However opportunities for spontaneous prayer and for using pupils own prayers during daily worship are limited. The recently re-established 'Worship Council' is extremely popular amongst eager pupils of all ages and supports the Christian ethos of the school well. However, its impact is limited, due to it being in its relative infancy.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE has a high profile and is valued by staff and pupils as a core subject alongside reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in RE and the standards attained are generally above national expectations. Pupils' understanding of Christian values is enhanced through good RE teaching. Pupils demonstrate good subject knowledge. For example, Year 4 pupils can explain the significance of listening to God, making reference to work they have focused on exploring the 'call of God' to the prophet Jonah. They are less confident in expressing what they learn from RE in terms of the impact on their own lives. The study of other faiths and a global outlook are being developed in the school curriculum and explored at every opportunity. This enhances pupils' understanding of and respect for diversity. Pertinent links are made in RE lessons to the school's Christian values. The subject leader monitors RE using observations and work samples. However, monitoring is informal and not rigorous enough. Neither are governors involved sufficiently to provide targeted support and challenge. Teachers demonstrate a commitment to further improving standards, exemplified by ongoing training in the subject and foci for staff meetings. Lessons are planned systematically based on diocesan guidelines. The RE curriculum is broad and effective and teaching is consistently good. Pupils' written and oral work is of a high standard and eager participation in activities is particularly effective. For example, a jigsaw activity with younger pupils around the Christian concept of 'sainthood' helped them to enquire deeply into the topic. Pupils are able to talk knowledgeably about the topics covered and this understanding is reflected in class 'floor books' and impressive and creative display work. However, only the oldest pupils have individual workbooks which are marked. This means that written feedback in RE across the school is limited and most pupils are not able to explain what they need to do in order to improve. There is a calm and inclusive learning environment which enables pupils and staff to share personal feelings and thoughts. For example, during a lesson for Years 3 and 4 focusing on 'prophets' pupils discussed God's call on people today. They were able to speak openly about current emotive issues such as famine, war, radicalisation and terrorism. This resulted in some outstanding discussion and very good reflection and creative writing. It also demonstrates the significant contribution RE makes to pupils' spiritual development at Silverdale St. John's.

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

The highly effective leadership of the headteacher provides a clear vision for sustaining the strong Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. This vision is understood and well supported by everyone involved in school life, including governors and parents. It is lived out across the whole school family. The school community works harmoniously together to ensure the very best provision for pupils. The governing body knows the school well because of the effective sharing of information by the headteacher and their insightful support and challenge. There is a clear focus for improvement which is underpinned by the Christian ethos of the school. Improving assessment in RE, as identified in the previous denominational inspection, has been satisfactorily addressed. However, assessment in RE, apart from in the older years remains less effective. That said, governors have secured good leadership for RE and the worship programme, both of which meet statutory requirements.

Parents and carers are supportive of the school's Christian ethos and values knowing that, 'Each child is treated as an individual.' They also recognise the impact of the new headteacher in, 'making swift changes that were necessary'. Such remarks reflect how parents' confidence and involvement in the school has increased. The staff team is well-prepared for working in a church school and for future leadership of church schools through diocesan training and through working with other church schools locally.

School leaders ensure that the Silverdale St. John's is at the heart of the community through sustaining well-established and valuable partnerships. Relationships such as that with a local specialist school for children with profound learning difficulties and disabilities are mutually beneficial and serve to develop pupils' awareness and respect of diversity and difference. Parents and governors value these links. They correctly recognise that the partnership between school and church and the strong parent and teacher association, supports pupils' strong academic and personal development very well. Governors and parents are justly proud of their school and the Christian tradition associated with it.