

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Whitefield Road, Bury, BL9 9PW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Manchester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Bury
Date of inspection	12 October 2017
Date of last inspection	October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 105321
Headteacher	Stephen Wedgeworth
Inspector's name and number	Ann Aspden 858

School context

St Peter's is an above average-sized voluntary controlled primary school with 263 pupils on roll. It is situated in a mixed socio-economic community in Bury. The school has a nursery unit for 2 year olds and a Foundation Stage unit with a Nursery and a Reception class. The school is made up of pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds with 35% coming from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is higher than average. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.

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

- The outstanding Christian leadership and vision of the headteacher and senior leadership team, ably supported by dedicated governors and staff, direct and inspire all aspects of school improvement.
- The pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to life and learning are founded on their understanding and belief in the school's Christian values of hope, honesty and compassion.
- Collective worship is central to the life of the school and has very significant impact on the lives of all pupils. The links that it has with Christian values and Biblical teachings are very clearly articulated by the whole school community.
- The inclusive and nurturing nature of the school is a clear response to the firmly embedded Christian ethos and enables pupils to flourish and succeed both personally and academically.
- The strong Christian ethos influences relationships throughout the school and inspires the building of partnerships between the school, families, St Peter's church and communities both locally and further afield.

Areas to improve

- Develop governors' approach to self evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness so that their role as 'critical friends' is further strengthened and continued improvement is ensured.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship in order to further develop their understanding of spirituality.

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

The school's strong and firmly established Christian character is underpinned by specific Christian values rooted in biblical teaching. This results in a learning environment which enhances the personal development, progress and academic achievement of all pupils. Pupils make excellent progress from their starting points and their exceptionally good behaviour and attitudes stem from their understanding of the school's Christian mission. A Year 6 pupil explained about what he had learnt from Christian values when he said 'There are many ways in which we can learn from Jesus. I have learnt that there are people who have much harder lives than us and that by helping them we are doing Jesus' work. I want to set the same example to others as He did.'

A clear and distinctive Christian ethos guides all aspects of school life. This message is made immediately explicit to all who come to the school by the St Peter's worship table that stands at the school entrance. As a result of the distinctive Christian ethos, all pupils can flourish and feel safe and loved. They prosper academically, spiritually and socially because of what the school community see as the 'Christian compassion' that impacts both during the school day and in family lives outside of the daily timetable. From their first day in school, every pupil is welcomed as a valued and special member of the school's Christian family. Parents and grandparents value the way in which their children are nurtured and appreciate the warmth that they and their children experience daily. The work of the pastoral team is seen as crucial and has a very positive impact on pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development. Parents value the opportunities that they have to play a part in their children's learning through family learning courses and fund raising events such as the Macmillan's coffee afternoon. Parents of different faiths make a conscious decision to choose the school and speak highly of the respect that the school has for other faiths and cultures. Pupils from different religious backgrounds talk about the Christian values as being 'what Jesus did and what we do in our own lives', as one of them put it. Relationships in the school reflect the ethos lived out by all members of the school family. The positive and clear links between the school, the parish and the local community, with the headteacher and the vicar to the fore, are empowered and flourish through the commitment of both communities. From an early age, pupils travel on a spiritual journey with Jesus and readily articulate the impact that learning about Him has on their lives. Consequently, the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is of a very high standard. Pupils have an understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith as a result of charitable fund raising. They are very proud of their work with the 'Send a Cow to Africa' project and the refugee initiative that was led by a local councillor and linked to the work of Christian Aid. Projects such as these give the pupils a true and practical understanding of the meaning of Christian values such as hope and compassion. Through these projects, pupils learn about Christian values in action and develop understanding of Christian communities in other parts of the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship at St Peter's reflects the school's strong Christian distinctiveness and is a vital and very much-valued feature of the school's daily life. Since the last inspection, the school hall has been re-designed in such a way as to create a spiritually and physically central hub for the school. Vibrant displays celebrate diversity and encourage pupils to reflect on their own and other pupils' origins and cultures. At the same time, the colourful and child-friendly displays of Christian symbols and values are a strong visual reminder of the school's deeply Christian ethos. Collective worship is respected, valued and enjoyed by pupils, staff and parents who talk about how it enriches their lives. They appreciate the role that they play in monitoring and evaluating collective worship and believe that acts of worship are led in a way which makes them very relevant to the life of the school and its individual members. Worship themes are meticulously planned so that all members of the school community enjoy a varied, sincere and valuable experience. As a result, they participate with energy and vigour and take away ideas and thoughts which make a significant impact on their spiritual growth and daily lives. Pupils evaluate each act of worship and feedback to staff and to other pupils with their suggestions and ideas. They readily speak about and diligently record the significant impact that each act of worship has on them and on the school family. Acts of worship are very closely linked to explicit Christian values, the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Bible and the traditions of the Church of England. A range of leaders including staff, pupils and members of St Peter's church are involved. All are firmly committed to ensuring that high levels of spiritual and moral reflection are an intrinsic part of every act of worship. Pupils eagerly and successfully research, plan and lead highly effective acts of worship. They speak with clarity about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils also have spontaneous opportunities to write their own prayers, pray and reflect in their individual classrooms where high quality and well resourced worship areas contribute greatly to the development of their own personal faith journey. The school has plans to extend these opportunities to the outdoor environment through the involvement of pupils and parents.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) was inspected at the request of and by arrangement with the school. Standards of attainment in RE are good, and sometimes better, with children making good progress. Pupils enjoy their lessons which are well differentiated and often delivered in a creative and imaginative way. RE has a high profile and is carefully planned using a questful approach through the Manchester Diocesan syllabus. It has the status of a core subject. The syllabus reflects the Christian foundation of the school as well as giving due weight to other world faiths. As a result of RE teaching that is at least good and sometimes outstanding, pupils have an impressive understanding of the key aspects of Christianity and other faiths. Parents comment on the diversity of knowledge that their children demonstrate. One parent said, 'My children know about other holy books and faith traditions. They know about how our religion (Islam) is different to Christianity and Judaism.' Pupils in Key Stage 2 said that they enjoy finding out about other religions because it helps them to understand other people and to love their neighbours. Carefully planned lessons result in pupils being able to apply skills such as enquiry, analysis and reflection as was demonstrated in a lesson that focussed on the lives of inspirational Christians. One pupil said 'In RE I have learnt how Jesus changed people's lives, taught them to be good and to care for one another. This is how we should live our lives, too.' Another pupil said that 'RE is my favourite subject because I can look at the deep meanings in the Bible. Now I feel I understand how Jesus sacrificed himself just for us and for the forgiveness of our sins.' The teaching of RE goes hand in hand with the teaching of Christian values and pupils talk about the difference it makes in their lives. This is demonstrated through the class RE displays which provide evidence of the depth of pupils' understanding and the quality of teaching. Through these displays, the school promotes the Christian ethos and reminds pupils of what they have learnt. The subject leader, who has a passion for the subject, has very good subject knowledge, has developed assessment systems and keeps up to date with all current developments. As a result, all staff and governors are well aware of the expectations of the RE curriculum. In the future the current assessment systems should be developed so that they effectively inform planning, teaching and learning.

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

Strong and purposeful Christian leadership and the pursuit of excellence secure the highest levels of personal development for all members of the school community. Senior leaders, including staff and governors, successfully promote the school's distinctively Christian character within a culturally diverse community. Their tireless drive ensures that the school's Christian distinctiveness is strong and bold and that the entire curriculum is firmly based on a distinctive Christian ethos. Projects such as the 40 Acts of Kindness in Lent engage the whole school family and ensure that the Christian message is lived out by every member of the school community. Senior leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's performance based on effective and insightful self-evaluation and can speak with great confidence about standards. They are committed to driving the school forward with energy and enthusiasm. The school's mission statement demonstrates their commitment to their school as Christ centred where pupils grow and learn with God. Governors demonstrate a secure knowledge of the school as a result of the systems of communication between themselves, the headteacher and other senior members of staff that are currently in place. Leadership of RE and collective worship is excellent and results in highly effective practice throughout the school. Professional development is a key feature of school life and as a result high quality Christian leadership has been secured at all levels. Teamwork, coaching and in-service training prepare staff very well for current and future leadership roles in church schools. There are positive and effective links between the school, the church and local and global communities. The school worships with the congregation at St Peter's church to celebrate significant festivals such as Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas, Mothering Sunday and Easter. Community partnerships often result in very successful improvement projects which impact positively on all pupils' progress. An example of this is the support the school gives to the local food bank through the Porch Box project. The wellbeing of both adults and pupils is of an extremely high priority with leaders living out the school's vision in a practical and hands-on way. Leaders ensure that the needs of their families are taken into account so that there are effective channels of communication. Parents also comment on the strength of the school's Christian message in a multi-faith community. One parent said, 'I really enjoyed the way in which the school involved us when we celebrated Eid. My children loved the party with the food and the dressing up. I feel we were really valued as a family.' Families and members of staff comment on the frequent acts of kindness and compassion shown by the headteacher and other leaders which in turn impact on pupils' attitudes to each other, their empathy for the wider community and the way in which they approach their learning. One example of this was the compassion show to a family that suffered a bereavement as a result of the Manchester bombing. One parent said 'Nothing is too much for the teachers here. I can't get over how much love and care they show. That's why I chose St Peter's.'