



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Leck St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Leck, Carnforth, LA6 2JD

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Outstanding

**Current inspection grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 26 March 2015

Date of last inspection: February 2010

School's unique reference number: 119535

Headteacher: Kerry Stafford-Roberts

Inspector's name and number: Ruth Wall (548)

#### School context

St. Peter's is a much smaller than average rural primary school with 43 pupils on roll. The proportion of children who have special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium funding is much lower than average. There are a high percentage of children who have joined the school late which is above the Lancashire average. The school works with a collaboration partner school which similarly serves a small village community. The headteacher leads and manages both schools. The school retains its own governing body. The school has recently achieved the Diocesan Church School Distinctiveness Award.

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

- The excellent care, nurture and guidance of all children demonstrate the distinct Christian ethos of the school in action.
- The school provides broad and creative learning experiences which deepen children's spiritual understanding across the curriculum, especially in religious education (RE) and collective worship.
- The outstanding behaviour of the children reflects the Christian ethos of the school.
- Relationships with local churches are strong in promoting a shared Christian vision for development and learning.

#### Areas to improve

- Through training, develop governor expertise in carrying out robust procedures for self-evaluation and use this to inform strategic planning.
- Build on and embed good practice in the assessment of children's achievements in RE so as to ensure an accurate picture of their progress.
- Find ways to involve parents in church school evaluation to broaden their engagement in church school issues.

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

The mission statement: 'Valuing one another as created in the image of God and therefore of infinite worth', sums up the school's commitment to ensuring that all children are encouraged to develop their God given individual skills and therefore their self-worth. Children speak with clarity and conviction of the Christian values they have learnt about and that are important for their lives. They understand the significance of the current value of forgiveness being explored this Easter time. One child explained that Jesus had demonstrated this in 'forgiving those who wanted him dead'. Parents say they appreciate the school's Christian ethos which is seen in action through the nurture, support and encouragement shown to their children. One parent wrote in a letter that the school is a place where her child can 'explore her own faith', at the same time as, 'demonstrating an enormous respect and interest in other faiths'. Teachers regularly acknowledge and celebrate children's efforts and achievements. In consequence, children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. The school's Christian character results in a secure and caring environment where children make good progress overall with some making outstanding progress. All members of the school community know they are valued and the ethos of trust and respect is clearly evident. The broad and rich curriculum contributes effectively to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has achieved the Diocesan 'Church School Distinctiveness Award' which reflects the school's commitment. Children are encouraged to show concern for others as part of the school's Christian service. They are made aware that Christianity is a global world faith through a range of activities. These include a focus on 'Christianity around the world' in school worship. RE makes a good contribution to the Christian character of the school. Schemes of work enable learners to explore Christianity and other cultures, beliefs and practices effectively. High quality displays and areas for reflection emphasise the school's Christian distinctiveness extremely well. A very good example includes a table display which encourages children to select objects that 'symbolise the real reason for our Easter celebration'.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship makes an excellent contribution to children's spiritual and moral development through the opportunities it provides for them to reflect on Christian values. Showing how the school has moved on since the last inspection, older children are now developing their leadership skills extremely well in planning and leading significant parts of worship. One child said, 'We enjoy making our own decisions'. Year 6 demonstrated their enthusiasm in planning parts of the Easter service. This included a dance, which expressed the meaning of a song, and a poignant power-point presentation. Children spoke of the discussions they had in choosing the 'powerful' images of Jesus which, one child said, 'make us feel empathy for him in his suffering'. The poem the children wrote alongside these images demonstrates their outstanding sensitivity and maturity. The quality of the singing from all the children is excellent. A child said, 'singing is another way of praying to God'. Children know formal prayers and understand the value of personal prayer which they say 'you can do anytime, anywhere'. The close partnership with the local Anglican and Methodist churches enrich worship. Children say of the vicar, 'He's really funny. He gives his stories a modern take and gets the message across really well'. The Methodist minister, they say, is 'kind and patient – with lots of simple but effective ideas'. Children also enjoy taking part in 'Rewind to Christmas and Easter' workshops at Ingleton Methodist Church. Special services take place in St Peter's Church and are well attended by parents. They appreciate that all children play an active part. Monitoring and evaluation procedures have led to effective school improvement. For example, the school council have now set up a rota for children to play instruments to enhance the worship experience. Worship enables children to develop an understanding of the qualities of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through the themes and stories included in the planning cycle. One child explained, 'When Jesus died, God gave the disciples hope and the power to spread their faith'.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Children speak positively of their enjoyment of RE. They are experiencing creative and sometimes challenging RE. There is a good balance between learning about and learning from religion. Children make good and sometimes outstanding progress, as is evidenced in portfolios, written work and in their oral responses. Showing how the school has progressed since the last inspection, children are now involved in self and peer assessment, developing understanding of what they need to do to improve. The Key Stage 1 teacher (subject leader) and Key Stage 2 teacher are both very experienced and demonstrate expertise and dedication in the quality of their preparation and teaching. However, they are carefully considering and trialling different approaches to assessment systems which, when the best model is decided on, will need time to become embedded. Children make links between the beliefs and practices of faiths, other than Christianity. They understand the importance of having an understanding of other cultures and faiths to prepare them for life in our diverse global society. A variety of effective teaching and learning strategies are used, including 'Godly Play', drama, art, craft and multi-media resources. Children's art work, entitled 'Art in Heaven', is a good example of children expressing their own spiritual thoughts of the Easter story through the medium of selected art materials and technology. Consequently, a Year 5 child said he had chosen dark for the background to symbolise 'gloom'. Another child explained the bright moon in her picture is a symbol of hope. A Year 3 child had chosen to put a heart in the centre of the cross as a symbol of God's love. Younger children benefit from using the Chatter-box resources to help them learn about the significance of Bible stories. Key Stage 2 children can express their own feelings commenting, 'There is trust in our class so we can think about things deeply'. The annual report for parents has an RE section to 'give a clear message to parents of the value and central place of RE in our school'.

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

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very effective in articulating the distinctive Christian vision. This ethos is promoted and established throughout the school and beyond to the community. Staff share this vision and act as very good role models to the children. The school has identified the need for the recruitment of a full cohort of foundation governors. Current governors provide support and are involved in monthly monitoring of the school. This has included its distinctiveness as a church school. Governors have not taken up diocesan training to keep them informed of the new guidelines and procedures. They recognise this is a key area for development in order to enable them to contribute fully to the school's self-evaluation and inform development planning. The Christian character is central in promoting the wellbeing and achievement of all members of the school community. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of the school's strong Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. There are a clear set of priorities in school action plans with a focus on continuing to raise the academic achievement of all learners. The input from local churches makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school and presents a positive image of the church. The school values its relationship with parents who are appreciative of all that the school does for their children. However, currently their views are not sought specifically on church school issues in the annual questionnaire. The close relationship with the partner school, together with the federation of local schools supports staff development opportunities, including those which benefit the school as a church school. RE and worship meet statutory requirements and are led with commitment and a genuine desire to continue to seek ways to improve further. The school values the 'often inspirational' RE training it has received from the diocese. The school seeks the views of children in a range of ways including circle time and discussions within school council meetings.

SIAMS report, March 2015, Leck St Peter's Church of England Primary School, LA6 2JD