



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Poulton-le-Sands Church of England Primary School

Church Road
Morecambe
LA4 5QA

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 23 June 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 119538

Headteacher: Victoria Bould

Inspector's name and number: Mark Hamblett 864

School context

Poulton-le-Sands is a smaller than average primary school with 186 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average and rising. The school serves an area of considerable deprivation. Most pupils are of White British heritage and only a very small proportion of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above average. An Ofsted inspection in April 2016 found the school to be 'good' in all areas.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Poulton-le-Sands CE School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Strong and mutually supportive relationships are explicitly based on the school's Christian values. This results in the school being a beacon of Christian love and care in the community
- The schools inclusive Christian ethos successfully underpins pupils' welfare, exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes to learning and to each other.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) are central to and effective in supporting pupils' spiritual development
- The visionary leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders ensures that the school's Christian character impacts constructively on pupils' academic achievement and social, moral, cultural and spiritual development

Areas to improve

- To ensure that governors, children and parents are engaged in driving forward developments of the school's Christian vision and values
- To improve prayer and reflection across the school by developing outdoor worship and reflection areas to complement those available indoors
- To increase opportunities for spontaneous prayer

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

Christian values are at the very heart of all the school does, lavishing love, care and compassion on the whole school family. The school has adopted an agreed set of seven Christian values which are well known and regularly referred to. They are attractively displayed, enhancing the school environment and well extending opportunities for prayer, reflection and worship. The 'core' values are exemplified and taught by the staff and lived by all. Pupils speak very positively about their values and where they come from, saying, 'They come from God. They show that we are Christians. They stop our lives from becoming chaotic'. The distinctive Christian character of the school has a positive impact on the academic standards, progress achieved and on the pupils' excellent personal and social development. The school's deeply Christian character successfully underpins the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils irrespective of their faith background. Behaviour is impeccable and attendance and punctuality are improving. There are excellent relationships throughout the school community, which is likened to a family, coming together in times of celebration as well as tragedy. High level pastoral care has clearly had a significant impact on the school family. School policies, including those for behaviour and anti-bullying strongly reflect the school's Christian ethos and values. Through very high quality RE provision, pupils possess a high degree of understanding and respect for Christians world-wide, as well as respecting other faiths. This is very well extended by a whole school 'multi-faith week' during which, through rich experiences, pupils explore different cultures, faiths and traditions. Work of this nature readily contributes to pupils' secure understanding of diversity both locally and globally. The explicit Christian character of the school is exemplified through high quality displays of pupil work and religious symbols which reflect the focus on embedded Christian values. This character creates the very positive, welcoming and supportive atmosphere across the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship plays a central role in the school's daily life. This is well-known by pupils and adults who recognise its relevance to their own lives and that of their school. It is extremely well-planned and is firmly based on Christian values, the church calendar and Bible teaching. Pupils enjoy and value their worship experiences, both in school and in the local parish church. The worship programme is appropriately extended through weekly worship in church and at principal festival times. Collective worship takes a range of forms and is led by members of staff as well as local clergy and visitors. This variety helps maintain interest and supports the programme very well. The support provided by the local church is excellent, this includes the vicar being regularly involved in planning and evaluating worship. Pupils are deeply engaged in worship through reading prayers, answering questions or participating in drama. Pupils clearly love singing and do so magnificently, enhancing the overall worship experience for all. They show respect during worship, expressing their joy through their responses and enthusiastic involvement. However pupils' involvement in planning, leading and evaluating worship is limited. Pupils know and use traditional Anglican responses and prayers, including the Lord's Prayer. They also write their own prayers, some of which are collected in the school's own prayer book. This helps them understand the value of prayer and reflection. Reflection spaces in classrooms are also well used and extend well opportunities for pupils to write prayers and reflect on 'talking to God'. However, spontaneous prayer is less widely developed. Dedicated outdoor space for worship and spiritual reflection is under-utilised. Pupils are able to discuss confidently the idea of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One pupil explaining, 'If God is helping people and looking after them, it is our Father in heaven. If God is teaching it is Jesus on earth. If God is listening to prayer, it is the Holy Spirit working'. Regular monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is undertaken to drive future improvements and keep themes relevant, interesting and dynamic.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is afforded great value, being planned for and treated as a 'core subject' across the school. Pupils make outstanding progress in RE and experience a high level of challenge in their learning. As a result, standards for all groups of pupils are in line with those achieved in other core subjects and are high in relation to national expectations. RE impacts on pupils' personal development and religious and spiritual development positively. For example, one pupil recounts how a unit of work on prayer has helped her pray at home. The quality of teaching in RE is outstanding with activities being relevant, varied and inspirational. Consequently pupils of all ability levels are very well engaged. Written and oral work is of a high standard and participation in activities like drama effective. For example, Year 3 pupils can address how meeting with Jesus transformed the life of Zacchaeus rather than only recount the story. 'I wonder' questions are pondered in silence during RE lessons which extend thinking and reflection effectively. Lessons are planned systematically based on diocesan guidelines. Thus there is a correct balance of learning between the teaching of Christianity and other world faiths. Likewise activities that help pupils explore the significance of religion for their own lives and in the world are well balanced. Consistent marking in RE is of high quality, equal to that found in other subjects such as English and mathematics. Responsive feedback challenges pupils to think deeply and provides clear next steps for improvement. RE is excellently led and managed with effective support, monitoring and evaluation in place. Clear plans for continued improvement are in place.

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

Under the effective leadership of the headteacher there is a clear vision for sustaining the very strong Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. This is well shared and supported by other leaders, including governors. It is lived out across the school family. The school community works collaboratively together to ensure the very best outcomes for pupils. Issues from the previous denominational report have been thoroughly addressed. Staff are prepared for working in the church school sector and for future leadership in this and other church schools through excellent in-service training, teamwork, delegation and coaching. A new member of staff spoke of what it meant to her to be working in this church school, 'It's had a massive impact on me, I feel as though God called me to work here, it is such a special place.' There is mutual support and common purpose between the church and the school. The school supports and benefits from strong and effective partnerships with parents, the local community and the diocese. There are appropriate international connections made for example through forging links with schools in Tanzania and a 'toilet twinning' sanitation charity project. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive commenting how the headteacher and her staff are prepared to 'go the extra mile, in order to support each and every member of the school family socially, academically and spiritually'. Governors are rightly proud of their school and the rich Christian tradition associated with it. Through it they have contributed well to securing high quality education based on strong Christian values. Governors and clergy are appropriately involved in the school's work and monitoring activities. This means that they have first-hand experience of the work being done to build the spiritual understanding and the academic progress of the pupils. The school has rightly recognised the need to continue to drive forward future developments based on its Christian vision and values. In keeping with this it has accurately identified the need to extend monitoring and evaluation to involve parents and pupils.

SIAMS report June 2016, Poulton-le-Sands CE Primary School, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA4 5QA