

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Little Bollington Church of England Primary School

Lymm Road Little Bollington Altringham WA14 4SZ

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Chester</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Cheshire East
Date/s of inspection	22 March 2018
Date of last inspection	06 December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 111251
Headteacher	Caroline Johnstone
Inspector's name and number	Rev'd Craig Watson 78

#### School context

Little Bollington is a smaller than average coeducational village primary school with a capacity for 105 pupils of which it has 91 pupils on roll. It is co-located with Holy Trinity church building. Opened in 1857, with most of the current buildings built in 1968, it has an above average number of pupils with education, health and care plans currently on role. A recent renovation has added an eco-classroom. Little Bollington has pupils with a largely White British heritage containing a significant number of pupils who experience deprivation, with an above average proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Bollington as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's distinctive Christian character leads to excellent relationships and conduct.
- Learners are very aware of the global nature of Christianity through links with a partner school, Ngede School, in Kenya and a focus on the culture and language of France.
- Spiritual growth is enabled and enhanced by the close links with Holy Trinity church, including the significant involvement of the vicar in school life, and through the priority given to collective worship by the leadership of the school.
- The imaginative use of the Anglican liturgy in a variety of settings, contribute to the positive impact of collective worship on all aspects of school life.
- The governors, head and middle leaders confidently communicate a vision that is rooted in Christian values and has an evident beneficial impact on the school's life.

#### Areas to improve

- A more embedded reflection process needs to be developed by all those involved in collective worship so that it better engages parents and the wider community.

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

The school's aim to be a Christian school at the heart of the community is evident through the Christian symbolism that permeates its buildings and the language and relationships that are demonstrated in the school community. The reality of the engraved glass window that greets every visitor, proclaiming 'God hold's us in His hands', is seen in the way learners interact positively with each other and with staff and visitors. The programme of teaching the school's explicit Christian values has significant impact on conduct and behaviour, with learners applying their learning out of school. One parent reports their child asking 'do you know what compassion is?' and then explaining it to them.

There is a common understanding of the Christian faith as a multi-cultural world faith that is the result of a partnership with Ngede school in Kenya and the school's teaching of French. The school includes in the study of French a visit to France for learners to experience all aspects of French culture including a French expression of Christianity. Visits by staff and governors, between the partner schools in the UK and Kenya, has a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all in the school community.

The high priority given to the Christian character of the school ensures an impact that is highly valued by all, with one parent commenting 'It is extraordinary how accepting of disability they are.' These views are confirmed in both learner and parent surveys, which also acknowledge that religious education (RE) plays a major role in reinforcing the Christian character of the school. The vicar of Holy Trinity plays an important role in supporting this through the delivery of excellent 'Godly play' sessions with younger learners as part of the RE curriculum. The challenge of RE teaching is very high leading to evident enjoyment from learners and an excellent understanding of the Christian faith and its application to school life.

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

Collective worship is seen as an important part of the life of the school which leads to learners responding in the service of others. The learners are able to describe Bible stories and talk about the person and teaching of Jesus Christ demonstrating a good understanding of the place these have in collective worship. They explain the Christian understanding of the nature of God as Trinity, and enjoy contributing to collective worship as well as attending it. Learners are increasingly taking responsibility for the planning and delivery of collective worship with the learners' worship group preparing a special act of collective worship each half term on the Christian value theme for the half term.

Collective worship takes place in classes, in the school hall, in Holy Trinity church and in other community venues such as carol singing around the village green at Christmas. This provides a range of settings which enable learners to recognise how worship is not limited to one particular context. The relationship with Holy Trinity church, and the churches in its group of parishes, provides insight into local Anglican practice and positive engagement with Christian festivals. As one parent comments 'I like the way that my son is learning about the Christian way.' Staff and clergy are regularly involved in the planning and delivery of a good quality collective worship programme. Input from the Baptist church through its youth worker contributes to an understanding of a range of Christian traditions.

The monitoring of collective worship is carried out qualitatively by the head and governors through their regular presence in a range of worship activities. Evaluation of collective worship flows from reflective practice by learners, staff and leaders. Although there is structured development planning that includes collective worship, the link between evaluation and that planning does not gather feedback from a range of stakeholders in a way that leads directly to significant improvement. This shows that progress on the previous inspection issue has been limited. Learners are encouraged to contribute to collective worship through writing their own prayers and through worshipping in song. They respond to this enthusiastically. Worship is invitational, however the choice of songs for worship does not always explicitly support the school's Christian ethos, diluting the focus on Jesus Christ, his life and teaching and reducing the opportunities for developing the learners understanding of the Trinity. The collective worship programme is a vehicle for the delivery of the school's Christian values and this is done with notable impact.

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

At all levels, there is a clear understanding of the school's Christian vision which leads to a common approach to developing the school as a church school. Governors, the head and senior staff consistently and confidently describe the school's purpose of 'through faith, changing lives for the better, forever' drawing on the Christian faith. This is expressed in an inclusive way which inspires confidence in learners, parents and the wider community.

The head and her senior staff have a thorough understanding of the school's performance through self-evaluation. They recognise that the school's progress and attainment needs further development, particularly with writing, however progress in reading is good. Through excellent self-evaluation, the leadership are setting high expectations including seeking to ensure that RE is a high priority, on a par with other core subjects. The Christian vision informs the whole curriculum with teaching staff delivering RE, ensuring expectations in all subjects are consistent, and leading to excellent pupil attitudes and behaviour for learning.

The school is at the heart of its community. It involves the local church, the Women's Institute, the Diocese of Chester, alongside parents and carers in providing a safe, inclusive learning environment. This provides the space for those learners with learning difficulties to find their place and thrive. A parent of one such child feels 'They seem to genuinely care about the children.'

Training is provided for governors and staff to enable them to develop their skills as leaders in a church school. This has delivered substantial benefits for the leadership of the school as a church school. The head's regular attendance at diocesan training alongside governors engaging in local authority and diocesan training has enabled leaders to carry out insightful and effective self-evaluation, and use it to develop the school as a church school, although some development is needed to better link this to planning in regard to collective worship.

The caring family feel of the school is clearly related to the excellent Christian leadership that is in place, with learners explaining how they should conduct themselves, how to make good and bad choices, and what to do if they get things wrong. The impact of this is evident in the reduction of persistent absence to notably below national average and no fixed term or permanent exclusions. Learners who are supported by educational, health and care plans report that they are treated as equals in the school community and are unreservedly positive about their school.

There is some evidence of governing body meetings including prayer times, and governors regularly attend collective worship in school and visit the school often. The school's leaders are continually keeping their strategic options under review. They are currently investigating the Chester Diocesan Academy Trust as a way of securing the school's Christian distinctiveness into the future. This demonstrates the importance the leadership places on Little Bollington CE Primary School living out its Christian vision.

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