

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bollinbrook Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

Abbey Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 3AT

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Chester

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Cheshire East

Date of inspection

28 March 2018

Date of last inspection

January 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided 111360

Headteacher

Mike Waters

Inspector's name and number

Carolyn Whiteway 933

School context

Bollinbrook Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average sized primary school and serves a mixed residential catchment area. It has a lower proportion of disadvantaged children than the national average. The number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds is much lower than average and a very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The headteacher has been in post for fourteen years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bollinbrook as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- With the support of his staff and governors, the headteacher has successfully created an inclusive and caring Christian community where all are equally value as unique children of God and supported to succeed.
- Pupils respond very positively to lively Religious Education (RE) teaching and varied opportunities for worship and as a result these make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Links with the local church and community have strengthened in recent years, and continue to do so, to the clear benefit and appreciation of all involved.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Continue to enhance the effectiveness of RE teaching to enable increasing numbers of pupils to achieve standards of attainment higher than the national average.

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

The school successfully fulfils its vision statement from Psalm I to be ‘...a tree firmly planted by streams of water which yields its fruit...’. All pupils flourish in the supportive Christian ethos created by a strong focus on the Christian values of love, honesty and respect, commented on by all members of the school community. Most pupils are, however, unable to articulate how these values reflect distinctively Christian teaching. The physical environment supports and celebrates the school’s Christian identity with crosses, stimulating displays and Bible quotations making an effective contribution to the spiritual development of all members of the school community.

Positive relationships are a real strength of the school and are clearly rooted in the Christian ethos. All members of the school community value what a parent referred to as a ‘family atmosphere’ where they feel supported and encouraged. One member of staff commented that the school is ‘like a second family to me. There is always someone there for me.’ The warm, supportive Christian ethos clearly contributes positively to pupils’ attitudes and behaviour and to attendance, which is a little above the national average. Pupils make good progress and generally achieve well with a parent commenting that she feels standards have risen significantly in recent years. School and national data support this view. Every effort is made to ensure that disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils are supported and given the same opportunities to thrive as others. Parents are very positive about the school, which they feel produces what one described as ‘caring, empathetic’ pupils. All pupils’ achievements are celebrated and pupils can earn house points or weekly certificates. Pupils consistently model the school’s values of love, honesty and respect and, as a result, behaviour in class and around school is excellent. They feel confident that staff and their peers will support them if they need help and that any instances of bullying will be quickly resolved by staff intervention.

The school strives to promote pupils’ understanding of communities outside the local area, for example through a diversity week and through teaching about other world faiths. Initiatives such as these together with a whole school cross-curricular focus on Global Learning are enabling pupils to develop a good understanding of diversity and difference.

Pupils are enthusiastic about RE which enables them to explore and reflect upon both Christian beliefs and those of other major religions. They are encouraged to think about and discuss the issues raised and as a result RE makes a significant contribution to their SMSC development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

All members of the school community value and respond positively to the daily act of worship. This is because worship is well planned and relevant whilst also being linked to the school’s values and the Anglican church year. Worship is distinctively Christian in nature, frequently using biblical material and focusing appropriately on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. During the act of worship witnessed, pupils entered the hall quietly and participated willingly. The use of a focus table with a cross and candles and the enthusiasm of the singing also contributed to the reverent atmosphere. Simple liturgical words of welcome and dismissal enable pupils to experience the Anglican tradition of their worship. This understanding is reinforced by visits to St. Michael and All Angel’s Church to celebrate the major church festivals.

Worship is varied and led by a range of staff, pupils, clergy and lay members of local churches. As a result pupils are familiar with some of the distinctive features of different Christian traditions. They are particularly enthusiastic about the Open The Book worship led by members of St. Michael and All Angels. Active links with local churches, particularly St. Michael and All Angels, enhance pupils’ experiences of faith outreach into the community. Parents, governors and staff all talked about the spiritual impact of a recent Easter Service led by Year 5 pupils at St. Michael and All Angels, which was attended by all pupils, their families and also members of the public. One Governor commented that the service ‘moved her to tears’. Parents also welcome the opportunities to join pupils for regular family worship led by different classes. Pupils have a little understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit but this is not yet well developed.

Prayer and reflection contribute well to pupils’ spiritual development. Pupils understand the value of prayer, one pupil commenting that she enjoyed collective worship because ‘it gives us time to be quiet and pray.’ Reflective areas in each classroom effectively prompt prayer and reflection in varied and imaginative ways. Prayers written by the pupils are used during whole school and class collective worship and pupils were proud to explain that the prayer used as a grace at lunchtime was written by a child in the Reception class. A weekly prayer group for pupils in school is led by the vicar’s wife and is well attended. A pupil Ethos Group is active in supporting the spiritual life of the school by planning and leading occasional acts of worship, developing class reflective areas and helping to design a ‘values’ mural in the school hall. Systems for the evaluation of worship by pupils and staff are well embedded. The views of parents are also sought and as a result worship is adapted keeping it relevant and inclusive.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is very well led and the commitment and enthusiasm of the RE leader, with the support of the headteacher, have led to RE having a key role in the life of the school. RE is treated as a core subject and given appropriate priority in terms of expectations for teaching time, planning and assessment. Teaching is consistently at least good and pupils clearly enjoy the subject. As a result they make at least good progress, with attainment in RE in line with the standards achieved in other subjects. Lessons are well planned and delivered, using a range of imaginative approaches which challenge and inspire learners. In a Year 2 lesson pupils enthusiastically discussed and reflected upon the meaning of the word 'resurrection' and its link to symbols used at Easter. The use of paired and group work help to ensure that lessons are fully inclusive. Where appropriate, cross-curricular links are made with English and with creative subjects enabling pupils to explore ideas through investigation and discussion and to present their work imaginatively. Year 5 pupils, for example, had written some insightful job descriptions for a messiah. Pupils enthusiastically discuss issues raised during RE lessons and are keen to share their thoughts and feelings. As a result RE makes a significant contribution to their SMSC development. The curriculum is rich and varied enabling pupils to develop an excellent knowledge of key aspects of Christianity and the Bible. They are also confident to talk about the beliefs, practices and values of other faiths and to make some links between these.

The RE leader has ensured that all staff have received appropriate training in the RE curriculum. Assessment is used effectively to inform future teaching and learning. Marking encourages pupils to reflect on their work and points the way to further improvement. The RE leader has also been instrumental in setting up cluster meetings with other local Church of England schools with a view to sharing good practice and moderating work.

Monitoring and evaluation are undertaken systematically and the results are reported to Governors annually. This has led to rising standards in recent years.

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

The leadership of the experienced headteacher is inspired by Christian values and evident in all aspects of school life. His vision for an inclusive Christian community is shared and upheld by all members of staff who effectively model expectations of behaviour and care. Leadership is widely distributed with staff, governors and the Ethos Group all playing significant roles. Leaders have very effectively addressed the areas for improvement from the previous report and the assessment and evaluation of RE are now exemplary. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness based on effective self-evaluation strategies, enabling the school to continue to improve the way in which it meets the needs of all pupils.

The committed body of governors know the school well and help to promote the link with St Michael and All Angels Church. They aim to follow the school's Christian values and, as one governor explained, do 'the right thing' when reaching decisions. They have attended appropriate training and are fully involved in the systematic self-evaluation of the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bollinbrook as a Church of England school. Several governors help in school regularly. Partnerships with local churches and with the local cluster of schools provide effective support for school leaders and strengthen its links with the local community.

The school's curriculum is firmly underpinned by Christian values and makes a significant contribution to pupils' SMSC development. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of the Christian imperative to support those in need and are active in raising money for local, national and international charities.

The leadership of worship and RE are given a high priority and staff are given opportunities as potential future leaders of church schools through a strong emphasis on supporting professional development in Christian leadership. Parents are very active in the life of the school with many helping in school and raising funds through the Friends of Bollinbrook. They are very supportive of staff and appreciative of their attitudes and hard work, commenting that teachers were 'caring and tolerant' and that the school has an excellent atmosphere of 'mutual respect.'

SIAMS report, March 2018, Bollinbrook Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School, Macclesfield, SK10 3AT