

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

<b>Halsall St Cuthbert's Church of England Primary School</b>	
New Street, Halsall, near Ormskirk, L40 5UG.	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Liverpool</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Lancashire
Date/s of inspection	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2018
Date of last inspection	May 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	119480
Headteacher	Doug Scholes
Inspector's name and number	Tracy Beatty 890

### School context

Halsall St Cuthbert's is a small, rural primary school which is held in high regard in the community and demand for places is strong. The school experiences very few staffing changes. The great majority of pupils are White British, with English as a first language. The proportion of pupils for whom pupil premium is received and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. There is a good attendance level across all year groups. The school has a number of awards. The headteacher is a national leader of education and the school is a National Support School.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Halsall St Cuthbert's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- This school is rooted in Christian principles and is a place of joy. Every piece of documentation, the website and school environment declare the school is distinctively different with Jesus and Christian values as its starting points.
- Christian values are modelled by a dedicated and expert staff team who live and breathe a distinctive Christian vision for the school and pupils.
- The leadership by the headteacher, supported by his leadership team and able governors, is inspirational.
- Links with the church are dynamic and inspiring. The dedicated vicar ensures the pupils have a very deep knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and this encourages their spiritual walk.

### Areas to improve

- Formalise the monitoring of collective worship to involve evaluation from a range of stakeholders. This will strengthen the school's judgement when tracking the effectiveness of worship.
- Extend opportunities for pupils other than Year 6 to plan, lead and evaluate worship. This will deepen their understanding of the elements of worship and broaden their spiritual development.

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

The headteacher has a strong Christian vision to enable pupils to have opportunities for deeper reflection about God and as a consequence, live differently. This vision is understood and supported by all members of the school community. The school's mission statement 'Do your best and let God do the rest' and the core Christian values inform everything the school does. It is on every piece of documentation, influences the curriculum content and how attendance is promoted, and is articulated by all members of the community. The website has a designated section for religious education (RE), which declares the school's Christian character.

Behaviour is exemplary because the values are deeply embedded and followed by all pupils. The vicar attributes the care pupils show each other to the fact they are always learning about forgiveness and compassion from the Bible. A pupil reinforced this stating, 'We used to have a worry box, but now we sort out our arguments ourselves and we don't need one. Now we have a friendship box.' This is where pupils record acts of kindness shown by others. Christian values contribute to an atmosphere for learning where every pupil's potential is fostered. This leads to raised attainment and a strong work ethic. The school is decorated with symbols and artwork displaying the school values, and denoting the central place of God in this school. All pupils are fully competent in articulating what the values mean to them and how they live differently as a result. This has a striking impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, comments from the pupil group about a lesson on life as a journey included, 'We all have ups and downs in life. I've learnt when we're sad we can reach out to people who can help us and to pray to God who's always listening.' Another pupil said, 'We all have positives and negatives in life. We need to talk about sad times so we know how to recover quickly.' They describe how every member of staff is 'totally kind and approachable' and would offer bubble time, private one to one chats, if they ever need support. The strength of relationships at all levels is reinforced by parents and staff who say, 'the support we receive from the leadership team is phenomenal'. Parents state that the headteacher is always available. They appreciate his visibility on the playground every day and the 'clinic' he offers to parents weekly for any concerns.

This is a generous school which raises significant sums of money for a range of charities. Pupils enthusiastically describe how they demonstrate their care for those less fortunate by supporting organisations such as the shoebox appeal and Christian Aid through toy sales and 'back to front day'. Many of their ideas are communicated through the school council which is one of the ways the school instils confidence in pupils from a young age.

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

Collective worship is a central and highly valued strength of the school. Pupils say they love collective worship because the headteacher, staff and vicar plan it thoughtfully and inject it with fun. In the worship observed, a sense of joy and celebration pervaded. Pupils and staff sang and danced enthusiastically and pupils read and led prayers confidently. Staff effectively use contemplative worship music for reflection. The Year 6 worship group regularly plan and lead worship. In this way, pupils develop a greater understanding of the features of worship and extend their spiritual awareness. Elements of the Anglican tradition are incorporated into daily gatherings. For instance, candles are used to signify the start of worship and reinforce the Trinity. Opportunities are given for pupils to reflect and apply the teaching to their own lives. On the theme of humility, pupils were encouraged to decide how they would put other before themselves that day. A Year 4 pupil later said that learning about humility helped him follow in Jesus' footsteps.

The vicar delivers fortnightly sessions of worship which further enhance the rich experiences offered to the pupils. There are regular opportunities for pupils to worship in the church building, which parents describe as 'uplifting'. One parent said the worship makes her feel special because of the effort put into it. Another said, 'I feel like I glow when I come here.' Pupils are given the opportunity to partake in confirmation classes, which a high proportion access. This year almost all the pupils in Year 5 were confirmed, fully supported by parents who now also attend monthly Eucharist services in church.

The effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation can be seen in the improvements made since the last inspection by strengthening pupil role in worship. Pupils demonstrate an impressive degree of understanding about the Bible as a result of the teaching interwoven through collective worship and RE. Prayer is a regular part of daily life in school with pupils using the prayer boxes in every classroom and corridors. Pupils write their own prayers for lunchtime and home time and confidently lead them. The value of personal prayer is evident in comments by pupils such as 'it's God that makes the difference here. We talk to Him a lot throughout the day'.

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

Pupils report that RE is always enjoyable and interesting, and many cite it as their favourite lesson. They draw attention to the different experiences provided for them including, 'We do RE through art, role play, film. It's never just writing'. In both of the lessons observed, a range of strategies and media were used to draw out the pupils' understanding. All pupils were fully engaged and the relationships at all levels are superb. In both cases, the skilled teachers' excellent subject knowledge ensured the pupils' understanding of the Bible was probed and stretched. As a result pupils were able to demonstrate mature thinking around the full significance of miracles and faith. Pupils throughout school demonstrate they have developed a spiritual language they are confident to use and are creatively applying to their lives. For instance, a KS2 pupil shared how the story of Peter walking on water has strengthened her own faith, teaching her 'to never doubt Jesus'. The ability to recall stories from the Bible exceeds age-related expectations. A Year 5 pupil confidently relayed the story of Moses. He explained how he is inspired to be unafraid to keep doing the right thing when he learns about characters in the Bible. A parent commented on how the growth of her child's knowledge of the Bible has surprised her and certainly influenced her behaviour at home. This was reinforced by all, demonstrating the way RE is intrinsically linked to Christian values and positively influences the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners.

RE books reveal tasks are closely matched to pupils' individual ability with poignant comments in the marking that challenge the pupils and stimulate their thinking. The same high expectations for other subjects are applied to RE, with pupils striving for excellence in presentation and content. As a consequence, they are proud of their RE books and the scrap books which supplement them. The monitoring of RE evidences high standards of attainment and the prominent profile of the subject. The assessments fully document the good progress that every year group is making. RE is reported on in detail to the governors. Resources are excellent. The school's investment in the subject shows the high priority it is afforded.

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

The headteacher's clear and uncompromising Christian vision is supported extremely well by staff and governors. His integrity is affirmed by governors, staff and parents who are testimony to the strong team he has built around him. His example has resulted in faith being demonstrated in the lives of pupils. They say, 'He shows us how to be Christian and how to be good friends to one another. He helps us make good choices.' Parents spoke passionately about how the relationships in the school stem from the Christian ethos and the values rooted in God. Staff turnover is low because morale is so high and everyone feels valued. Parents feel the school listens to their views and say they cannot fault it.

The vicar contributes fully to school life by joining in with events and celebrations. Parents value the effort he makes in building relationships with them and his offers of support. The headteacher and vicar stand as a united front and their dynamic partnership has built excellent relationships on every level. The substantial mutual benefit is further exemplified by the numerous opportunities provided for school families to worship throughout the year. The pupils also prepare class worship in church once a term, which their parents attend.

Self-evaluation is accurate and robust. Leaders and governors are always seeking ways to improve and sustain the vision for future leaders. Their previous strengths have been built upon. RE and collective worship are continually evaluated and always feature in the school improvement plan. Church school distinctiveness plans are discussed at every full governors meeting. When appointments are made, governors insist applicants profess a commitment to uphold the Christian ethos. The school places much importance on the development of staff, nurturing the leadership potential of all employees. This contributes to the perception of pupils and parents that everyone, including every teacher, 'loves to come to school here'. As a National Support School, Halsall St Cuthbert's is fully outward-looking, engaging with other schools on matters of school improvement and development. The school has positive links with the diocese through training and support and this contributes to further development of church school distinctiveness.

SIAMS report January 2018 Halsall St Cuthbert's CE Primary School, New Street, Halsall, Near Ormskirk, L40 5UG.