

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Poulton St Chad's Church of England Primary School

Hardhorn Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire, FY6 7SR

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Blackburn

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local Authority

Lancashire

Date of inspection

08 February 2018

Date of last inspection

June 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided 119556

Headteacher

Jan Potter

Inspector's name and number

Helen Sage 909

School context

Poulton St Chad's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a larger than average primary school serving mainly pupils from a socially and economically advantaged area near the town centre of Poulton le Fylde. The percentage of pupils who are receiving support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below the national average. The majority of pupils are White British and from Christian backgrounds. There is a very small percentage of pupils from other faiths. The headteacher took up her post in 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Poulton St. Chad's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Inspirational leadership provided by the headteacher has galvanised the whole school community to successfully make this the best church school possible, serving the community with love and respect.
- Effective pastoral and academic support and a commitment to the worth of every individual, based on the school's Christian ethos, means that all are nurtured, supported and managed with compassion and attention.
- Pupils explore diversity within the Christian faith and the impact of the school's Christian values through creative and challenging religious education (RE).
- Worship and prayer is deep, purposeful and the heartbeat of the school.

Areas to improve

- In order to extend effective professional partnerships with other schools and diocesan networks ensure that the excellent practice in RE, especially linked to exploring multi-cultural Christianity and links between Christian and Muslim schools in the area, is more widely shared.

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

The long established Christian ethos of the school is valued by all members of the school community and has a positive impact on behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning. School leaders and governors have embedded clear expressions of Christian distinctiveness, ethos, and Anglican character at the core of this exceptional school. Explicit Christian values, which are rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, support a total commitment to meeting the holistic needs for all groups of pupils. This results in outstanding behaviour and high attendance, within an atmosphere where acts of positive Christian behaviour and values are rewarded through initiatives such as 'Star of the Week'. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and all stakeholders describe it as being, 'part of a compassionate and loving family'. Christian values such as respect, impact positively on learning, the curriculum and good attainment and progress, which is above national averages. Uniqueness is celebrated and difference respected. The school's

motto, 'Fair Firm Faith Fun Friendly' is rooted in a lived out Christian vision and ethos. This acknowledges every individual as a child of God. One parent commented on the significant impact on their child's development. They highlighted that the values promoted through faith, the school and the teachers, 'focus on providing opportunities to build confidence,' resulting in positive experiences and a 'caring environment'. All rightly see its Christian ethos and values as being at the heart of the school making it a very special place. One staff member commented, 'our school gives a warm welcome to all who come here'. The headteacher has worked tirelessly to continue to embed the school's Christian character. As a result it is an extremely supportive Christian community, caring deeply for the needs of all its members and the wider community. For example, through the 'Grassroot' special topic day. This day supports Thivikar, a child living in the slums of Chennai. It gives pupils the opportunity to learn about how the Christian message impacts on life in India. It also highlights the benefits of charitable giving: one pupil commented, 'Jesus told us to love everyone'. There is a culture of Christian giving across the school through supporting local, national and international charities. Pupils are centrally involved in this, including choosing which cause is the most appropriate to support and organising proceedings. Such opportunities clearly benefit all pupils as evidenced by the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education, effectively exploring values in worship and through a creative RE curriculum. The pupils speak freely about their new understanding of Christianity in another culture.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily worship is central to school life and is a natural response to the spiritual growth that the school's Christian ethos promotes. Worship and prayer lie at the heart of the school and are recognised by all stakeholders as an essential component of every day. All who attend, regardless of their faith and belief, are affirmed and enriched by attending worship. Worship is uncompromisingly Christian, grounded in the person of Jesus and in the understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils are offered a wide variety of collective and corporate worship experiences that have a dynamic effect on their spiritual and moral development. Worship incorporates 'Values for Life' a Christian values resource from Gloucester Diocese. This resource used within the worship programme, the links with the local church and regular Junior Church Eucharist all bear witness to and encourage a great depth of understanding and response to worship. Pupils come to worship reverently, sit attentively and participate enthusiastically. Many speak of the way they feel close to God through worship and that their own faith is enriched by the opportunities for prayerful reflection. Parents and governors regularly attend collective worship. All agree that it is an uplifting and joyful experience. Parents speak of how their children had benefited from worship and shared with them their thoughts on their relationship with Jesus. One parent commented it is because of their daughter's experience of worship they now attend church. The spiritual life of the school reflects Anglican forms of worship very well. Prayer underpins all aspects of school life. Pupils have opportunities to commit their personal thoughts and prayers to God. They value and use well the reflection areas in each class. Worship is carefully planned. It has themes from the Christian year and addresses various Christian values. Pupils learn about a different value each half term. They speak about these values knowledgeably and reflect on how they influence their own behaviour and relationships. This helps pupils to build a deep, personal spirituality leading to a profound understanding of faith. Evidence of this was seen in worship evaluations and worship partners such as pupils' co-leading with Year 11 from the local Church of England high school. Pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically about worship; one commenting, 'a time of peace to talk to God'. The headteacher is responsible for coordinating worship and is supported by the worship team. Since the previous denominational inspection, leaders and governors have developed excellent systems for reviewing worship, taking views of parents and pupils into account, so that there is an ongoing process of evaluation and development. This leads to further planned improvement. In keeping with the school's Christian character, worship always includes biblical teaching and its relevance for life today. Pupils have a good understanding of the significance of the Eucharist within the Anglican tradition which is embedded through worship and extended through links with the RE curriculum. Throughout the year services, such as Education Sunday, are held at the local parish church. These occasions provide pupils with a wider context for the understanding of Anglican tradition and practice. Pupils speak positively about their enjoyment and appreciation of these times to worship as 'one big family leading parts of the service'.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Pupils' standards of attainment and progress in RE are in line with other subject areas across the school and the diocesan expectations for their age. Teachers and pupils are enthusiastic about RE, commenting that teachers make it fun. The work set is appropriately challenging and encourages pupils to 'dig deeper' in their thinking. Through the well balanced curriculum, pupils acquire a deep knowledge of multi-cultural Christianity and learn key facts about a range of other faiths. The school networks enable pupils, in a limited way, to share their excellent experience and expertise with their peers from other schools and faiths. However, setting up and managing by staff of this excellent

practice is not shared widely enough in other areas such as through diocesan links. A number of pupils spoke of how 'proud' they felt at hearing a Muslim pupil say how they had a better understanding the different ways Christian Lent was 'experienced around the world' following their discussions. The development points from the previous denominational inspection have been excellently addressed. The curriculum is enriched by a range of visitors and through visits to places of worship. The local church is used as an educational resource for RE when exploring sacred space and the Eucharist. Parents comment that their children find such visits inspiring and their personal faith is nourished. This has led some to go on to confirmation as a result. As seen in lessons, there is a respectful learning environment, which enables and inspires pupils to take risks when offering their personal reflections and experiences. They talk confidently about the positive impact of their knowledge and understanding of other world faiths, particularly Islam, and say that one of the highlights is learning about faiths other than their own. There is a well-established partnership with a Muslim academy in Blackburn, where mutual visits play a key role in deepening pupils' understanding of Islam in the context of a diverse society. This adds significantly to the promotion of pupils' SMSC development. Pupils are rightly very enthusiastic about the links with pupils from this Muslim academy, reflecting positively on their mutual learning. RE is very well led by an enthusiastic, passionate and knowledgeable subject leader and the headteacher. The revised 'Questful RE' diocesan programme of study provides a creative and challenging structured learning scheme. This encourages pupils to have a deeper understanding of biblical text, Christian values and beliefs, whilst also developing an understanding of other faiths. The subject leader and headteacher are guiding the introduction of the revised syllabus, steering training for teachers and have a careful routine of monitoring both pupils' and teachers' work. This ensures all have secure knowledge and understanding of the materials to address pupils learning needs.

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

The headteacher's strong and effective leadership is underpinned by her personal faith. The clear Christian vision and values are very well expressed and central to school life. Staff, parents and governors strongly support the vision and values and readily articulate its significant impact on the school's daily life and on the academic and personal development of pupils. School self-evaluation has developed very well since the previous inspection. Effective, regular systems for monitoring and evaluation are embedded and securely linked to the school's vision and values. The impact and success of these systems is clear and is evaluated by all stakeholders, as evidenced in questionnaires, the worship team, school council and governors committees minutes. Consequently, school leaders, including governors, have a thorough and accurate understanding of the school's performance, its distinctiveness as a church school and the school's strengths and areas to develop further. The incumbent, curate, parishioners and clergy from other local Christian churches are regular visitors and nurture the close links between pupils and their respective Christian communities. This positively enhances pupils' awareness of different Christian denominations, thereby strengthening their understanding of Christian distinctiveness. The school strives for excellence embedded in Christian teaching and has responded to the Church of England's vision for education, 'Deeply Christian serving the common good'. This is clearly evidenced in the current school development plan, which exemplifies the strong culture of continued improvement the school successfully strives for. In this leaders have rightly identified the need to revise the school mission statement to take account of the updated diocesan and national vision for education. The revised mission statement is mid process and is involving all stakeholders closely and appropriately. Another aspect rightly identified for development is to further support aspirational leadership at all levels. This leads to well structured opportunities for staff to develop leadership roles through their continued professional development. As a result all staff are very well supported. Governors are highly effective in their role and significantly involved in the life of the school. They have secured excellent leadership of both worship and RE, both areas of which meet statutory requirements. Parents speak highly of the school, feel valued and have confidence in the work it does. They speak of the care and concern shown to their children and the very professional way in which staff work. Parents believe pupils' academic and personal needs are being met and progress is extended. This is evidenced through the enrichment programme and activities through before and afterschool clubs such as gardening. Parents, and governors commented on 'wrap around care' saying 'the school thinks about all our children's needs making school a happy place' They recognise how this expression of Christian faith underpins children's education as lived out through its Christian vision and motto. A parent commented, 'they enjoy going to school', faith is engaging 'always fun for them'. Purposeful partnerships exist with diocesan and other school networking opportunities, which encourage a positive and supportive learning environment across the locality. The school has some excellent and mutual beneficial procedures for sharing good practice across, for example, English and mathematics but this does not extend to RE often or widely enough.