



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Haslingden Old Road,

Rawtenstall,

Rossendale

BB4 8RZ

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 26 June 2015

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 119368

Headteacher: Ian Holden

Inspector's name and number: Ruth Wall (548)

School context

St Mary's is a smaller than average-sized primary school with 190 children on roll. The large majority are of Bangladeshi heritage with a small minority of Pakistani and white British heritage. A well-above average proportion of children speak English as an additional language. The proportion who have special educational needs and disabilities is average. The number of children supported by pupil premium funding is above average. A higher than average proportion of children join or leave the school at times other than the normal transition points.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Senior leaders, governors and staff provide an inclusive education, based on Christian values, which underpins the excellent relationships within the whole school community.
- Children's broad learning experiences contribute very effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) have a very positive impact on children's attitudes and behaviour.
- The strong relationship with St Mary's Church promotes a shared Christian vision for spiritual development and learning.

Areas to improve

- Embed the evaluation of church school features into the whole-school self-evaluation cycle to ensure it contributes effectively to strategic planning.
- Involve all members of the school family in a review of the mission statement so that it fully reflects and celebrates the school's distinctively Christian ethos.

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

The school prayer reflects the impact of the Christian ethos of this school: 'Bless O Lord this school. Make it a place of peace and love...joy and light...kindness and grace...goodness and hospitality...' Summing up its significance, a Year 6 girl said, 'It's important that we are all those things'. **Firmly established Christian values influence all aspects of school life and are evident in the attitudes and behaviour of adults and children.** Parents affirm that this helps to influence children's conduct at home. **Parents of different faiths say they chose this school because the traditional Christian values and cultural diversity are beneficial for their children.** As a result, relationships are very strong between all members of the school community. Pupils know that any issues are dealt with promptly and fairly and as a result they feel valued and secure. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent as a result of the focused Christian perspective given to planning across the curriculum. The strong commitment to active Christian service means that those in need are well supported. **Colourful displays and Christian signs and symbols emphasise the school's distinctiveness and support the children's spiritual awareness and development extremely well.** One display uses carefully selected colours to show children's feelings relating to the Easter story. A child's unique picture shows yellow shafts of lightening which, he says, 'represent the insults people hurled at Jesus as he hung on the cross'. RE makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual development. This includes the whole school Easter Fest where specially designed inter-active activities help children in their understanding of the Easter story in a lively and thought-provoking way. Pupils say learning about different religions helps to give them an understanding of their similarities and differences. **The outstanding Christian ethos based on the values of respect and trust creates a culture in which all children feel safe and supported. This enables them to learn with confidence.** Ofsted data and the school's own analysis show that all groups of children achieve well and make at least good progress. **As a result of the effective strategies in place rates of attendance are improving.**

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship makes an excellent contribution to children's spiritual and moral development. **It is inclusive, valued and enjoyed by all.** The curate, together with the coordinator from this school and the neighbouring St Paul's School, plan themes together based on Christian values, the Bible and major Christian festivals. This extremely effective collaboration also involves regular evaluation which leads to ongoing improvement. **Demonstrating how the school has moved on since the last inspection children are now involved in the evaluation process and enjoy regularly planning and leading worship.** They say, 'We can use our own ideas so we understand it more', and, 'We put the Bible stories in our own words.' Thankfulness Thursday is a recent introduction to class worship which helps children reflect on the week's worship theme. Children have an excellent knowledge of the life and person of Jesus and a developing understanding of the nature of God. Children say that the Holy Spirit is a gift that can help them in their daily lives. A child wrote, 'Did you know that gentleness is a fruit of the spirit.' Children appreciate the curate's regular input. They say, 'She always tries to answer our questions', and, 'We do role play which gives us a better perspective on the Bible story.' The school community experiences a variety of worship. **This includes the very popular Reach Puppets and regular contributions from the local Methodist minister, which all agree create opportunities for expressing worship which are fun and active.** Formal prayers are said and there are many examples of children's personal prayers in classroom reflective areas and the school entrance. These show an understanding of the value of personal prayer whatever their religious faith. Children love to sing in worship and on special occasions the choir serves to enhance the worship experience. The whole-school worship observed was led by the headteacher on the theme of gentleness. The song, 'Jesus' hands were kind hands' was in response to a child's request as she said it was appropriate for this theme. Various children explained how they had taken on the week's challenge to demonstrate this quality in school and at home.

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

Christian principles strongly guide the leadership, management and governance of the school whose Christian ethos is embedded in all that it does. The mission statement is distinctively Christian and included in the school brochure and web site. It has not, however, been reviewed for some time. The headteacher has a successful distributive leadership style. He creates a positive working environment in which teachers are able to take responsibility and be creative. Teachers are never complacent and self-evaluation is integral to everything the school undertakes. Issues raised at previous inspections have been addressed. The school knows itself well and has accurately identified priorities for improvement. Pupils play an important part in this self-evaluation, both informally and through the school council. The governing body excels at being a supportive, yet critical friend and their various skills are used to very good effect. They recognise the need to develop their role in contributing to strategic planning through more formal procedures in monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school. The school works hard to involve parents and keep them informed. The outstanding work of the child and family advisor is valued and helps to create harmonious links between school and families of different cultures and circumstances. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. Both are extremely well led, with planning and evaluation contributing effectively to future development. Diocesan and in-service training enhance the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. There is a clear set of priorities in school action planning which is continuing to raise the academic achievement of all learners. The school plays a pivotal role in the way church, school and community work together and important celebrations are shared events. The school is both distinctive in its Christian character and inclusive in its approach to diversity. The high level of pastoral care and support for each other is rooted in Christian love. This has had a significant impact by enabling the school community to unite during recent challenging times.

SIAMS report, June 2015, St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Rawtenstall, BB4 8RZ