



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Crescent Avenue  
Over Hulton  
Bolton  
BL5 1EN

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Manchester**

Local authority: Bolton  
Dates of inspection: 8 July 2016  
Date of last inspection: December 2010  
School's unique reference number: 105236  
Headteacher: Simon Charnock  
Inspector's name and number: Robert Haigh 660

#### **School context**

St Andrew's is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British. The proportion known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well below the national average. The proportion with special educational needs or disability is below average. The school is located in an area with a higher than average number of professional families. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Eco-School Silver and Healthy Schools awards. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher (2013) and deputy headteacher (2014) have been appointed.

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

- Effective Christian leadership ensures that the school's Christian character is paramount.
- Harmonious relationships, based on the deeply embedded Christian values of friendship, forgiveness and trust make the school a warm and welcoming Christian community within which children feel secure, valued and able to develop their God-given potential.
- The school's approach to inclusion and its culture of prayer, reflection and enquiry enable children to become increasingly confident, spiritually aware and pro-active learners.
- The strong alliance of school, home and parish enriches the school's Christian ethos.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Extend children's participation in planning, leading and evaluating worship to give them greater ownership and support their leadership skills and spiritual development.
- Establish more effective strategic planning for the development of Christian leadership at all levels so leaders and governors can confidently and consistently articulate and implement an explicit Christian vision for church school distinctiveness.

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

A vibrant learning culture and a desire that children experience the love of God are at the heart of this inclusive and happy school family. The mission motto, 'With God's Help We Aim High' is lived out daily and creates an environment in which children thrive. The agreed seven core Christian values, including peace, hope, thankfulness and perseverance are the inspiration and language of the school. The Christian ethos underpins children's positive attitudes to learning and their excellent behaviour and care for each other. A Year 6 boy said, 'We are part of God's family and try to follow God's ways every day'. Their enjoyment of school encourages their good attendance. Staff are regarded as Christian role models. They show the school's Christian character by supporting all children to achieve whatever their circumstances. The Christ-centred ethos and harmonious relationships ensure that children feel safe, secure and loved. Diligent support of the disadvantaged and those for whom learning is difficult reflects the mission motto. As a result, children who are eligible for the pupil premium and those with special needs and disabilities make good progress. Children's attainment in 2016 was generally above national expectations. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is outstanding. Christian values are threaded through the exciting 'learning challenge curriculum', for example in literacy, the arts, humanities and science, to enhance children's spirituality in learning. Eye-catching faith and values displays and Christian symbols around the school prompt their spiritual awareness. They show a prayerful interest in current affairs and a strong moral conscience. Their school-based roles develop their social skills. Children grow in their understanding of cultural diversity through special events and links with multi-faith centres of worship. Eco-projects reflect and promote their sense of stewardship for creation. The school council leads much charity fund-raising, explaining it as an expression of Christian compassion and thankfulness. Although children's knowledge of Christianity as a multi-cultural global faith is not secure, religious education (RE) makes a strong contribution to their appreciation of religious diversity. It also helps them understand Christian belief, values and practice.

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

Worship, central to school life, is inclusive and uplifting for all. Children enjoy and highly value their worship experiences. It contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral and cultural development, enabling them to discover the relevance of faith and express its meaning in their lives. They speak with confidence and conviction about the learning and inspiration it provides. A Year 5 girl stated, 'Worship helps us to feel God is close and because of that we feel safe'. It includes classroom and larger school gatherings and services at church monthly and at Christian festivals. These occasions enable children to appreciate different expressions of Christian belief and practice thereby growing in their understanding of faith and discipleship. Children gain a secure understanding of Christian teaching because Christian values, the life of Jesus, Bible stories and the church calendar feature in worship. The strong focus on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit enables children to demonstrate an impressive degree of understanding of the nature of God in Christianity. Children sing joyfully, which they say lifts their spirits to God. They join in Anglican prayers and responses confidently and thoughtfully, including the Lord's Prayer. Children value prayer and reflection, which they say increase their sense of God's presence. A Year 2 boy said, 'When I close my eyes to pray I see a picture of Jesus in my mind'. They regard their classroom and outdoor reflection areas as sacred spaces for personal prayer and quiet contemplation. Children are involved in the evaluation of worship. Planning and leadership, however, are mainly adult responsibilities, providing too few opportunities for children to contribute. The popular leadership of the PAIS team and interesting teaching of the vicar enable children to experience different worship styles and grow in their biblical knowledge. The inclusion of other religions in planning increases children's awareness of key similarities and differences. Children of other faiths are nurtured in their participation in worship. Muslim parents express contentment that their children are 'learning about God across the faiths'.

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

RE is popular and makes a strong contribution to children's spiritual, moral and cultural development. Attainment is at least in line with school and national expectations. The recently-adopted Diocese of Blackburn syllabus has a good balance between learning about religion and opportunities for children to reflect on what their learning has meant for them. Both strands are being utilised effectively as staff become more confident and skilled in implementing the scheme. Thus, children are enabled to explore their own spirituality within a Christian worldview and relate Christian teaching to their own experiences. Visitors from other faiths to the annual multi-faith week help them develop their knowledge of world religions. Children make good progress, as evidenced in floor books, written work and in oral responses to the creative and challenging teaching. The subject leader's expertise, vision for the role of RE in a church school and dynamic leadership builds teachers' confidence and skills. Her sharing of best practice with colleagues means the RE teaching is mostly outstanding and consistently good. This improves the quality of children's learning and standards of achievement. Well-focused teaching strategies, stimulating questioning, creative use of craft, drama and media and visits to places of worship also promote children's learning. Marking and assessment processes are increasingly rigorous. Monitoring and evaluation through lesson observation and book scrutiny, however, are not yet systematic and thorough. RE lessons contain opportunities for independent enquiry, partner work and class debate. Children ask searching spiritual and ethical questions and discuss their own and others' views with enthusiasm and interest. This improves their ability to enquire, listen, empathise, evaluate and reflect.

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

The headteacher's strong Christian leadership and dynamic promotion of Christian values is very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher. Their desire that children realise their God-given potential is shared by governors and staff, motivating everyone to do their very best. RE and collective worship development is well-resourced, effectively led and given a high profile which ensures that statutory requirements are met. Christian values influence key policies. School self-evaluation is becoming more robust and informative. The governing body and senior staff use this to develop convincing and effective strategies for church school improvement. Governors are vigilant, visible and challenging with leaders, which enhances their understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness. They are proud of the school and ambitious to sustain its Christian character, although their strategic role in church school leadership development is not yet fully established. The shortcomings identified at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. The school values diocesan and local authority support which improves the abilities of governors, leaders and teachers to enhance the school's effectiveness. The school's united purpose with St Andrew's church is strong and their collaboration with parents makes for a vibrant Christ-centred community alliance. The vicar's leadership and pastoral ministry in school and beyond are highly valued. The links with local organisations, partner schools and a variety of regional faith centres, including Manchester Cathedral and York Minster are highly effective. They enhance children's skills and the school's Christian identity, whilst facilitating the professional development of staff. Families are known well. Their needs are met through a culture of Christian outreach, invitation and nurturing. This builds parents' confidence in, and relationship with, the school. They recognise how distinctive Christian values are embedded in the life of the school and the positive impact they have on their children's attitudes, behaviour and personal development.

SIAMS report July 2016 St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Over Hulton, Bolton BL5 1EN