

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

### Batley Parish Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Stocks Lane Batley WF17 8PA	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	Leeds
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kirklees
Date of inspection	28 November 2017
Date of last inspection	18 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 107736
Headteacher	Philip Sunter
Inspector's name and number	Geraldine Cooper (696)

#### School context

Batley Parish Junior Infant and Nursery School is an averaged size, one form entry, school serving the town of Batley. The school has 209 pupils on roll. The school population is divided almost equally between pupils of white British heritage and pupils of South Asian heritage. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average. The proportion of children with special educational needs is also above national average and the majority of these pupils require intensive support. Although the school serves an area of significant deprivation the proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium is below average. Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in leadership and staffing. The headteacher has been in post since 2015.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Batley Parish Junior, Infant and Nursery School as a Church of England school are good.

- All members of the school community have a strong, shared, understanding of the school's values of respect equality, love, trust, friendship, forgiveness and compassion which create an environment in which pupils are nurtured and make good progress from generally low starting points.
- Collective worship and religious education combine to create a strong Christian ethos which equips pupils to apply Bible teachings in their daily lives.
- School leaders have a clear understanding of the significance of the distinctively Christian ethos on the well-being and academic development of all pupils.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop and embed across all areas of the curriculum a shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development.
- Equip and engage the governing body in more robust systems of monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctively Christian character.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship.
- Develop effective methods of recording the diversity of learning in religious education (RE) across the whole school.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith which recognises the Trinitarian nature of God.

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

All members of the school community are confident in their assertion that the school values of respect, equality, love, trust, friendship, forgiveness and compassion create an environment in which pupils are happy and eager to learn. These values are effectively explained through collective worship and re-enforced throughout the school day. Restorative practice is well established in the school and pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of forgiving and being forgiven. When incidents do happen, they are effectively dealt with, increasingly with minimal adult intervention.

Very positive relationships have been built with parents and attendance is above national average and levels of parental engagement are high. The school's Christian ethos emphasises the importance of inclusion and equality of opportunity which is evident in the high-level of support provided to vulnerable pupils and their families. Consequently, all pupils make good progress, particularly those who start school with skills below national expectations. Careful monitoring and targeted intervention prepares pupils for national tests in which they perform in line with national expectations.

Pupils benefit from an imaginative, broad and balanced curriculum which provides many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are confident in engaging in discussion and are respectful of different viewpoints. However, children's spiritual development would be enhanced if there was a stronger shared understanding of how this is defined within the school.

Engagement with the wider community, particularly the memorial service for Jo Cox, has provided a practical context for both spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and the living out of the school ethos. Pupils are proud of the diversity within their community and appreciate that although school values are described as Christian and rooted in Christian teaching they are also shared by people of different faiths and no faith. They are keen to explain the importance of RE to their knowledge and understanding of different faiths which goes beyond those of the immediate community. However, understanding of diversity within Christianity and Christianity as a world faith is at an early stage of development.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Local Church leaders and the headteacher work collaboratively to ensure that Christian teaching and practice is embedded in collective worship. It is evident from parent and pupil consultation that collective worship is recognised as having an important part to play in school life. but pupils understanding of, and capacity to evaluate and lead, worship, would be enhanced by a greater involvement in the planning process

All teaching staff are involved in leading collective worship and pupils appreciate the different approaches to sharing stories that this brings. They also appreciate opportunities to lead seasonal services in church. These are well attended by parents who see them as an important aspect of school life.

The headteacher ensures that collective worship is planned around themes that are relevant to the values of the school and the Christian year. An opening prayer is used to help pupils to understand the elements of worship and provides a structure for those leading worship. Opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship are not yet fully developed.

A broad range of Bible stories and teachings are used creatively so that pupils have a clear understanding of the Christian significance of their school values and how they help them to make choices in their daily lives. Music is used imaginatively to engage and inspire. Pupils understand that the songs they sing, with enthusiasm and reverence, are a way of praising God. Many pupils talk about collective worship as being an opportunity to meet with God. Pupils of all ages talk with confidence about their understanding of God and Jesus and are sensitive to the fact that there are differences of opinion and belief. Understanding of the Trinitarian nature of Christian belief is, however, underdeveloped.

Prayer is integral to the life of the school. A range of prayers are used throughout the day and these are explained during collective worship. Links between prayer and the school's values are made explicit, for example the Lord's prayer was used to embed teaching about forgiveness. Reflection areas are present in all areas of the school and pupils are confident in talking about the diverse ways in which they are used; for prayer, to express worries and as places of calm. It is evident that this helps them to appreciate that prayer is individual as well as corporate. Many pupils were able to describe how they used prayer to support themselves and others through the challenges that they face.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

The RE leader is a strong role model and advocate for her subject. She has successfully introduced the new diocesan syllabus which has been embraced very positively by all members of the school community. Progress in RE is

carefully monitored against end of year expectations and pupil performance is in line with other subjects. Teachers plan and evaluate their lessons carefully against clearly identified learning objectives. This means that lessons are effectively differentiated so that all pupils make progress. Pupils find the well-structured and imaginatively planned lessons challenging and enjoyable. They talk very positively about how RE deepens their understanding of the school's values and about the importance of understanding different faiths. RE supplements many of the themes introduced in collective worship but pupils are clearly able to distinguish between the two and recognise that RE 'gives you more time to think and understand'.

The range of strategies used to teach RE complements other curriculum areas in the promotion of critical thinking skills, pupils' ability to respect differences of opinion and, consequently, their SMSC development. In the early years and foundation stage pupils' learning is recorded accurately and engagingly through the use of big books. The diversity of experience through which older pupils learn in RE is not as widely recorded and does not fully represent the depth of learning which takes place.

School leaders work effectively with subject leaders and it is evident that the RE leader has benefitted from clearly defined expectations. There is a focussed action plan for RE which is an accurate reflection of the current strengths and opportunities for development. This is shared with the senior leaders and is reflected in the Foundation Governors' action plan.

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

Following a period of significant staff change in the school the headteacher has established a stable senior leadership team with a shared commitment to the school's Christian ethos and values. Together with the incumbent and experienced foundation governors he and the deputy headteacher have begun an accurate reappraisal of the effectiveness of the school's distinctively Christian character and ensured that all previous areas for development have been addressed.

The extent to which the school's values inform policy is evident in the successful introduction of restorative justice which has had a positive impact on behaviour and relationships in the school. Similarly, the introduction of a new reading strategy has not only developed pupils' literacy skills but, alongside the RE curriculum, led to a deepening of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a consequence of this pupils are becoming more emotionally resilient and better equipped to learn. Detailed analysis of data enables school leaders to effectively target resources. The gap between the attainment of vulnerable and non-vulnerable pupils is narrowing and the proportion of pupils attaining above national expectation is increasing.

The remit of the 'collective worship committee' has been widened to include all aspects of the school's distinctiveness as a church school and foundation governors, led by the chair of governors, have begun to more actively assess the school's distinctiveness, alongside the headteacher. The strategic impact of this process would be strengthened if there was a stronger shared understanding amongst the full governing body of the factors which contribute to the school's distinctiveness as a church school.

Middle leadership is being developed and the RE Co-ordinator has benefitted from Diocesan training which she has been able to share with the rest of the school. A wider engagement with such training would enhance the capacity of staff to more effectively share in the schools monitoring and evaluation process.

The relationship between school and church is very strong and together they create a Christian hub within the community. Parents of other faiths are happy to attend services at the Church and appreciate the positive impact of the school's strong Christian ethos on the inclusive attitudes and behaviours of the pupils and staff. Together they provide generous support for national and international charities and, at the instigation of individual pupils, for local causes. Pupils take pride in their school and participate enthusiastically in local and regional sporting and cultural events. Their success is shared by the whole school and adds to the strong family and community atmosphere which parents and visitors consistently ascribe to the impact of the school's Christian ethos.

SIAMS report November 2017 Batley Parish CE VA Junior, Infant and Nursery School, Batley. WF17 8PA