



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St. Barnabas CofE Primary School

Colin Street

Warrington

WA5 1TG

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Liverpool

Local authority: Warrington

Dates of inspection: 12 November 2015

Date of last inspection: May 2010

School's unique reference number: 111299

Headteacher: Penny Johnson

Inspector's name and number: Jean Forward (625)

School context

St. Barnabas is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is slightly lower than average. The proportion of children with special educational needs is above the national average as is the proportion of children who receive funding through pupil premium. The school has part-time nursery provision.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness St. Barnabas as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher and her vision for the development of the school ensure that church school distinctiveness is a priority.
- The school is extremely successful in creating a loving environment underpinned by Christian values which has a direct influence on children's well-being and academic success.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is outstanding and is rooted in the school's Christian ethos and its approach to prayer and reflection.
- The school's focus on developing all aspects of Religious Education (RE) has a positive impact on children's understanding of Christianity and other faiths.

- Links with the parish church of St. Barnabas are extremely strong. As a result, children have a clear sense of belonging to the wider Christian community.

Areas to improve

- Fully develop the marking of RE in order to establish consistent practice to support the children's understanding of how to improve their work and respond to reflective questions.
- Strengthen the focus of the governors in the area of church school distinctiveness in order to broaden discussion and support the headteacher's vision for the school's Christian character.

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

A strong commitment to Christian values and the development of the whole child underpin the work of the school. Children talk confidently about the importance of core Christian values in the context of the teaching and example of Jesus. The school's promotion of these values is evident across the curriculum and in the daily life of the school. Positive relationships are a key element in the school's success and these are rooted in a Christ-centred approach. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding as a result of the focused Christian ethos. Expectations are consistently linked to the school's core Christian values. As a result, children demonstrate high levels of self-esteem, awareness of others and the need to persevere. All members of the community know that they are valued and the outstanding ethos of trust and respect is clearly evident. Children are extremely courteous, friendly and responsible. They are confident when discussing the Christian life of the school. Children say that they are able to share concerns with their teachers and they know that these will be addressed in a sensitive way. Parents say that the school prepares children extremely well for the transition to secondary education. They commented on the fact that their children are excited and enthusiastic about learning. The school has a strong commitment to Christian stewardship, supporting a range of charities including Rocco's Hospice, the Warrington Foodbank and MacMillan Cancer Care. Children speak of the importance of showing generosity and compassion for those in need. Colourful displays and Christian signs and symbols emphasise the school's distinctiveness and support the children's spiritual awareness and development extremely well. Children value the reflection areas in their classrooms and in the corridors. They say that these help them to think and pray. The introduction of pop up prayer spaces has added a further layer of prayerfulness and reflection to develop children's understanding of the importance of personal spirituality. The school delivers highly effective teaching about other faiths through RE and this contributes well to children's cultural development and their positive attitudes to the diverse nature of the school community and wider society. Links with St. Barnabas church are well established and members of the congregation are involved in joint activities including Christingle and Easter activities. Data Dashboard and the school's analysis show that attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with or above the national average when children leave in Year 6.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The act of collective worship is central to the life of the school. Planning is thorough and incorporates themes based on Christian values, the Bible, major Christian festivals and saints' days. When appropriate, the worship plan also includes reference to key festivals of other faiths. The school places Christ at the centre of all it does and collective worship enables children of all ages to understand how the teaching of Jesus guides Christians in their daily lives. The headteacher and governors monitor and evaluate the planning and delivery of worship. The worship council also plays a monitoring role and children's responses to individual acts of worship are recorded and these influence future planning. Children eagerly participate and enjoy planning and leading year group worship for the whole school. Silence and moments for reflection play an important part in the school's approach to prayer. Anglican responses and traditional prayers also contribute to the

development of children's prayer life. Music and worship songs are chosen carefully in order to support the central themes. On the day of the inspection, the Eucharist was celebrated in the school hall. Children, staff and governors worshipped together with a deep sense of reverence. The parish priest from St. Barnabas church leads worship in school each week and supports many activities linked to the development of the children's faith and understanding. She prepares Y6 children for confirmation during school time. The school worships in the parish church for major festivals. Visits to the church make an excellent contribution to children's spiritual development and to their understanding of key Christian celebrations. This creates a unique link with the worshipping life of the parish and the Anglican tradition. Worship also enables children to deepen their understanding of the qualities of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A Y6 child said, 'These are different ways we can describe God.'

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The school has a strong commitment to developing all aspects of teaching and learning in RE using the diocesan syllabus. Progress and standards are excellent, matching those in other subjects. This is achieved through excellent and varied teaching and good use of a wide range of resources. The subject is taught in a creative way with a strong emphasis on developing Christian values. There is an excellent balance between learning about religion and learning from religion. Children are enthusiastic and say that they enjoy a variety of written activities, discussion, role-play and art. Good prior knowledge and thinking skills were demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson about the Good Samaritan. Children in Year 6 used prior learning when they completed individual and partner tasks about pilgrimage to Walsingham. They responded confidently when asked to express their opinions and there is a high standard of written work in their exercise books. The sharing and careful consideration of ideas and opinions make an outstanding contribution to children's spiritual and moral development. One child commented that 'everyone enjoys RE' and another said, 'Many of the activities we do teach you to be a better person'. Children often take on the role of experts when learning involves the wider Christian church or other world faiths. This enables children to share their different experiences of faith and practice. Marking guides children and enables them to understand next steps in their learning. However, there is some inconsistency in the way staff approach this. The well-informed and committed co-ordinators monitor the subject using observation, book scrutiny and cross-checking of standards. A sound programme of assessment activities and effective recording of attainment and progress ensure the school maintains high standards.

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

The headteacher is a dedicated Christian leader who takes every opportunity to promote the school's distinctive Christian character. Through her leadership, staff and governors are committed to sustaining an outstanding Christian environment in which all aspects of children's development and well-being are fostered and promoted through biblical teaching and Christian values. The strong senior leadership team is highly effective in identifying clear priorities for the development of the school's Christian ethos. The headteacher attributes children's successful learning to their ability to draw on an understanding of life rooted in faith and to the Christ-centred qualities of the school. The school knows its children and their families extremely well and meets individual needs through a culture of Christian nurturing. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian qualities of the school and speak highly of the respect with which they and their children are treated. A parent said, 'The school staff are compassionate and sensitive', explaining that children's happiness and success are rooted in the Christian values at the heart of the school's daily life. Policies and planning have Christian values and the school's vision at the centre. Foundation governors are knowledgeable and have a clear understanding of their role. They are highly effective and support the school in a variety of ways. Action plans for RE and worship are included in the school's improvement plan. This ensures that all aspects of church school distinctiveness continue to contribute to the development of the school's Christian foundation. The school has successfully addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection. Excellent provision is made for all staff to participate in continuous professional development. This makes a valuable contribution to highly effective teaching

and learning throughout the school. The headteacher also ensures that staff have access to training which supports future leadership in church schools. The school has a strong link with the diocese through headteacher cluster meetings and opportunities for professional development. Parents speak enthusiastically about the ways in which the school and church work together to provide an outstanding Christian education.

SIAMS report November 2015 St. Barnabas CofE Primary School, Warrington WA5 ITG