



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

The National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christ Church, Church of England Primary School

Deeside,
Ellesmere Port
CH65 6TQ

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire West and Chester

Dates of inspection: 11th February 2016

Date of last inspection: 23rd September 2010

School's unique reference number: 111351

Headteacher: Helen Friend

Inspector's name and number: Christine J Buckley 525

School context

Christ Church School is a smaller than average primary school. The school has a higher than average number of children eligible for pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils in local authority care and for pupils who have parents serving in the armed forces. Most pupils are white British. The school is housed in a building that will soon be demolished as they move into a new building in a few months' time on the same site. The headteacher has been in post just over a year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Passionate Christian leadership from the headteacher and religious education (RE)/collective worship (CW) leader ensure that Christian distinctiveness is a priority.
- Strong links with St. Thomas' church enable children to belong to the church and school and provides opportunities for spiritual development.
- Collective worship has a positive impact on the prayer life of the children so that they can pray in any place and at any time.
- The understanding of God's love for every individual results in every child being nurtured and challenged to be the best that they can be.

Areas to improve

- To put systems in place so that the governing body is fully involved in regular self-evaluation of the school as a church school.
- To provide opportunities and experiences so that the children develop a greater awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith.

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

Christian values are evident in every aspect of school life with 'love' and the teaching of Jesus to love one another central. This results in excellent relationships and behaviour. The older children help to care for the new children when they begin in reception and during the Christian value days children of all ages work well together. Parents commented that they are able to refer to Christian values such as honesty and forgiveness at home. Discussion about these when correcting their children is often more effective than other sanctions. Children are encouraged in their good behaviour in school by thinking about Jesus' teaching especially on forgiveness and thinking about 'what would Jesus do? On entering the school a display, made with children, makes a bold, explicit statement that this school is Christian using words of Jesus, about loving one another, and referring to Christian values. In addition, every classroom has a reflection area used by the children to pause and write a prayer or respond in a different way. Some of the older children talked about looking at scenes from around the world and using these as an inspiration to pray. These reflective areas are used very creatively by children and frequently changed in order to maintain an interest in reflection and prayer. This is one of the many ways that the spiritual development of children is supported. The underlying Christian belief that every child is special results in the care, support and challenge provided being individual and enables each child to flourish emotionally, spiritually and academically. Intervention strategies and nurture groups are some of the ways this happens. This is demonstrated by data showing that all children, including those eligible for pupil premium make good or better progress and even during difficult times are able to continue with their learning. RE makes a significant contribution to learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In promoting Christian values, for example 'respect' it plays a major role in determining the Christian character of the school. The study of other religions has given the children an understanding of and respect for others who differ from themselves. In each lesson, links with Christian values are discussed. This was seen in a year 2 lesson when children were discussing the nature of love and jealousy in the story of Joseph. Children do not have a well-developed understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. The school's anti-bullying policy stance of zero tolerance of any kind of bullying is founded upon Christian understanding of the uniqueness of every individual. The children are aware of sanctions used when any incidents occur. The school has an electronic log of any incidents that can be used to analyse any possible concerns.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Children and staff enjoy and participate enthusiastically in worship and say that it is a helpful way to begin the day so that there is time to reflect and think about who we are and the love of God. Collective worship is central to the life of the school. It is well planned with the key elements of worship included and noted on the planning sheets to remind all who lead collective worship. Some of the older children use this to help them plan worship and through this they are able to express their spirituality. During reflection time there is time to consider moral issues and new challenges in the light of Biblical teaching. There is a clear understanding of the Church year and major Christian festivals as well as Christian values. Through teaching and practical activities children develop an understanding of the Trinity. Children benefit from different groups of people leading worship giving them a breadth of experience. This includes a half termly communion service that is held in school with members of the local church also participating. Through this and visits to the church they have some understanding of Anglican liturgy. Worship supports spiritual development and through worship children learn to pray using words and actions that enable them to pray at other times. They are keen to write prayers, or pray spontaneously and many of the children say that they also pray at home even though it may not be the custom of their family. One child said that she had taught her mother to pray and now they both pray before sleep. Many parents told how their children loved to sing songs of praise at home and about, even in the supermarket, showing the positive impact of worship. Children have some opportunity to lead worship and the recently formed ethos group took responsibility for the prayers on the inspection day displaying confidence and an understanding of their relationship with God through Jesus. Children are now involved in regular evaluation of worship and regularly analyse the results in order to make recommendations that lead to changes. This was an

area for improvement at the last inspection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a high profile in the school and the school has been awarded the RE Silver Quality Mark and has continued to develop since this award. The RE subject leader is now a Quality Mark assessor and her enthusiasm and knowledge ensures that she is well able to lead improvement. RE is taught creatively and is enjoyed by the children and staff. Since the last inspection there has been a great deal of progress and all the areas for improvement have been met. Providing opportunities for pupils to think about what RE means to them, is now an integral part of the learning process which was one of the areas for improvement. Children benefit from additional opportunities to engage with those of other faiths and cultures and visits to a synagogue and a mosque contribute to RE lessons in school. Children say that learning about other religions helps to give them an understanding of their similarities and differences and respect for those of other faiths. This demonstrates how the school has developed since the last inspection when it was suggested that the school organise visits and use artefacts to support children's knowledge and understanding. Learning in RE is always related to Christian values and planning ensures that Christianity is a major focus. In this way RE supports the knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. The older children demonstrated their knowledge of Bible stories and their ability to evaluate and reflect upon the practice of religion by different faith groups. Assessment procedures are in place and there is a clear understanding of children's progress. This ensures that teaching and learning meet the needs of every child. During lessons observed, time was given to recap previous learning and for reflection during the lesson with different creative activities for children of varying abilities. Progress and standards are in line with those of other subjects that are in line with age related expectations, and work books are evidence of this. Monitoring teaching and learning by the RE subject leader and a governor show that RE is never less than good and often outstanding. Each class also has a 'Special RE book' that records class activities, visits and comments from the children showing their involvement in active learning. Planning is very thorough and every topic begins with a 'big question' so that children are invited on a journey of exploration. This enables the children to analyse and interpret new knowledge and apply things they have learned to their own lives.

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

The headteacher and RE subject leader are passionate in their Christian leadership. Following the example of Jesus they nurture and challenge every individual to be the best they can be. This has made a significant contribution to the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. For them prayer is at the heart of all they do and God is therefore present to help in every situation. They give a clear direction to the staff who are excellent role models for Christian values. Staff are encouraged in their professional development, two of whom have completed the Christian leadership course. This shows commitment by the senior leadership to make the Christian nature of the school evident in all the school does. The RE/CW leader is given time and support to carry out her responsibilities which results in highly effective practice. This impacts on the lives of the school community by changing attitudes to those who have a different religion and culture. There are good relationships with parents who regard the school as a family who they can turn to in times of need. Staff support children and parents in difficult circumstances by taking time to listen and involving appropriate outside agencies. Since the last inspection, links with the church have been strengthened. Members of the church community help with reading in school; another leads a lunchtime club for Key Stage 2 children; and the assistant minister leads a 'messy church' session which has begun with the reception children and their parents. Children go on visits to the church and they held the school Carol service in the church for the first time, which was a huge success with parents and parishioners. Children regard the church as their church evidenced by the remarks of one small child who when taken to the church for a secular meeting told the adult in charge that 'this is my church'. Some governors are actively involved in CW and RE but recent changes to the governing body means that not all have a full understanding of Christian distinctiveness. They have not been involved in evaluating the school from this perspective. They are however keen to provide appropriate support and challenge when systems are put in place.

SIAMS report February 2016 Christ Church, Primary School, Ellesmere Port CH65 6TQ