



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Newton Bluecoat Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane
Newton with Scales
Preston
PR43RT

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 30 June, 2016

Date of last inspection: 19 January, 2011

School's unique reference number: 119805

Headteacher: Jim Bird

Inspector's name and number: Susan Cliffe (832)

School context

Newton Bluecoat Church of England primary school is a smaller than average sized school serving a rural area. It has 182 pupils on the school roll with 35 in the nursery. Pupils are taught in single year group classes. The majority are from white British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage and the percentage with special educational needs are both below the national average. Since the previous denominational inspection, there has been a new incumbent and the nursery now operates on a full time rather than a part time basis.

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

- The outstanding Christian vision of the headteacher and school leaders impacts positively on pupils' attainment and progress
- The strong links with church deeply support the spiritual development of the school community
- Pupils' excellent behaviour is built on and positively reflects the school's embedded Christian values

Areas to improve

- Increase the involvement of pupils in planning, delivering and evaluating collective worship thereby ensuring constructive contributions to future improvement
- Cultivate community links outside the local area to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and faiths and of Christianity as a world faith
- Raise standards of religious education (RE) by embedding effective systems for assessment and evaluation

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

The school's Christian distinctiveness is encapsulated in its mission statement, 'We believe in excellence by inspiring every child to flourish within a caring, Christian community'. This vision, along with the Christian values, has been developed in consultation with all members of the school family. As a result, stakeholders talk about these values with confidence. They are based on the teaching of Jesus and are, as a governor explained, 'At the heart of everything we do.' The pupils are extremely positive about their school and its strong Christian ethos is reflected in their exemplary behaviour and outstanding spiritual development. Pupils are keen to attend school and feel safe as it is, 'A place that makes me (pupil) feel really special, where God wants us to be kind to each other'. As a result, pupils know that bullying is not tolerated and is swiftly dealt with. They are taught well and work in a caring, respectful, calm atmosphere inspired by the embedded Christian values. This leads to high standards and progress for pupils. Christian duty is lived out in supporting others who are in need. The school generously supports charitable giving, most recently 'Kidneys for life' and the Barnardo's 'Big Toddle' event. The strong Christian character of the school ensures that children feel nurtured. Relationships within school are excellent and are attributed to its Christian ethos. The relationship with church has become strengthened and a large percentage of children and staff now worship each Sunday thereby extending and strengthening the school's Christian ethos. A teacher commented, 'We are more than colleagues; we are friends. This is such a happy school.' In keeping with its strong provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, the school provides many opportunities for pupils to express their thoughts and feelings. RE makes pupils reflect and answer big questions, contributing effectively to the Christian character of the school. Pupils recognise RE's importance. They have a developing knowledge of other faiths and cultures, including that of Christianity as a world-wide faith. However, this is not deep enough to ensure the cultural aspect of pupils' awareness is fully nurtured. School leaders are aware of this and firm plans are in place to bring about improvement.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship has a distinctly Christian focus and is valued highly, being enjoyed by the whole school community. A parent commented, 'At home, my young child loves singing hymns and saying prayers they've heard in worship.' At its heart are Christian values, the person of Jesus Christ and Bible teachings. A value is focused upon half-termly. Pupils see worship as central to their lives with one remarking, 'It helps us all to be kind.' The Anglican traditions of the school are central to worship. Since the previous denominational inspection, provision has become further enriched with more worship taking place outdoors. All teaching staff now lead worship and visitors are becoming increasingly involved in delivery. Examples of this are the regular visits from a Baptist artist and the director of a community gospel choir. As a result, provision is more varied with a member of the worship team stating, 'It has become more fun.' Singing is joyful and behaviour and engagement are excellent. Pupils are beginning to be involved both in planning and evaluating worship. The recently introduced worship reflection book enables the pupils' worship team to consider improvements in future provision. Their monitoring has already led to changes such as the choice of hymns for worship. However, the involvement of pupils and stakeholders in planning and assessing the impact of worship is not rigorous enough. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For example, they can confidently relate the symbolism of the Celtic knot to the idea of the Trinity. The vicar is a key contributor to the delivery of worship and involves the pupils very well, especially in the half termly Eucharist. All members of the community are invited to this and it is a highly valued part of the worshipful life of the school and church family. The school is a prayerful place with each class having ownership of the prayer areas where pupils can reflect and be still. An example is in a prayer area which displayed text messages to God where one pupil wrote, 'Thank you for making my life so cool. I love my life'. Prayer takes place during the daily act of worship and at many other times in the school day. For example, a reception aged child said, 'You can pray to Jesus over there in that corner'. Pupils make good use of the prayer tree in the hall and recognise the support that worry boxes and prayer boxes give them.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupil's attitudes to RE are extremely positive. It enjoys a high profile across the school and is taught as a discrete lesson. One pupil explained, 'We are passionate about RE. It is fun.' Teaching and learning are good allowing pupils of all abilities to explore and progress. RE scrapbooks and the RE portfolio of children's work show evidence of appropriate development across a range of skills. Attainment in RE is in line with national expectations. Lessons are linked to clear learning objectives and pupils take a pride in their RE books. In lessons, pupils are attentive, respectful of others and give thoughtful responses. 'Jesus is like a lighthouse. He lights up the world and stops us from crashing into the rocks,' remarked a child in reception class. Teachers help pupils to improve in RE through effective feedback. The RE leader is enthusiastic and well-focused. She works closely with the RE governor and keeps the governing body well informed. She is supported by school leaders who strive for excellence in this area. She regularly attends diocesan cluster meetings, is aware of current developments and communicates these effectively to colleagues. Systems for planning, monitoring and assessment have been implemented. However, to ensure improvement in teaching and learning, formal tracking systems assessing the progress of individual pupils need to be deployed. Christian values are explored meaningfully through RE and it impacts positively upon the SMSC development within the school. Thoughtful and sensitive entries written into books demonstrate this. For example, a Year 5 pupil wrote, 'I think the most important thing about church is people.' The variety of tasks set, including those where art and drama are used, appropriately enhance pupils' enjoyment of the subject and consequently their learning. RE enriches pupils' understanding of other cultures and faiths linked with events such as the world faiths' week. During this time, visitors from a range of faiths, most recently Buddhist and Islamic, are welcomed into school. However, pupil visits to a range of places of worship to enrich knowledge and understanding as part of the RE curriculum are underdeveloped.

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

The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher and governors ensures that the Christian vision for the school is shared, agreed and integrated fully into all areas of school life. The commitment of the chair of governors and headteacher to this vision acts as a spur for continued development across the community. The governors have been a great source of pastoral support when, since the previous denominational inspection, the school faced challenging times. The school has good systems for self-evaluation which contribute to high levels of outcomes for pupils. The pupils have a stronger voice through the school council and the worship group where their opinions and ideas are acted upon. Parents feel that the high standards of attainment and behaviour within school are directly attributable to it being a Christian school. They feel involved, well informed and see the school as 'a hub for the community'. This allows the Christian ethos of the church and school to permeate the local area. However, systematic consultation with all stakeholders in evaluating the ongoing church school effectiveness does not take place on a regular basis. This decreases leadership ability to identify issues of concern from stakeholders and consequently act upon them. The school development plan ensures that church school improvements, especially within RE and collective worship, remain high as school priorities. However, the monitoring and evaluation of RE by school leaders is not rigorous enough to support continued improvement within the subject. The school uses diocesan support effectively to nurture school improvement by attending briefings and training. School is actively involved in many community events such as the church anniversary tea party and has links with local groups such as 'Little Lambs' pre-school group. The professional development of the effective staff team is a priority. Many support staff have joined the teaching profession and teachers have increasingly embraced leadership roles. The school has rightly endeavoured to extend pupils' understanding of the wider world. This has been done by linking with an urban school in the United Kingdom and also by developing charitable work globally. However, this is not fully embedded into school practice.