

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Darwen Holy Trinity Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Bank Top, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 2RW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Blackburn
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Name of multi-academy trust	N/A
Date of inspection	14 June 2018
Date of last inspection	January 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 119357
Headteacher	Kathryn Bolton
Inspector's name and number	Kathryn Pym 726

School context

Darwen Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School is situated at the heart of the community that it serves. The percentages of pupils receiving pupil premium funding and having special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) are well above national averages. Since the last denominational inspection, the school has experienced significant leadership issues. The school was judged to require improvements during its last Ofsted inspection (May 2017). However, a substantive headteacher was appointed in September 2017, ably supported by a consultant deputy headteacher. This has provided stability, structure and a period of rapid improvement. The school has significant links with the parish, diocese and local authority.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity as a Church of England school are good

- The school unites to live out its Christian vision for all, so that they may, 'Learn together, shine together.'
- The 'High 5' values that the school prioritises form a direct link between the Bible and aspects of school life, such as behaviour, learning and leadership. Consequently, relationships and pastoral support for all members of the school community are strong.
- Relationships with the parish and the wider community are mutually beneficial and develop a sense of generous shared Christian service.
- Times of worship, reflection and prayer are highly valued by pupils and staff. The stimulating learning environment is used to provide inspirational space to enhance the spiritual development for the whole school community.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that provision for all pupils is of the highest quality so that progress in learning is maximised and sustained.
- Provide sustained opportunities for all pupils to deepen their understanding of the Bible and how faith can enrich their own lives and that of others.

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

The development of the school's mission statement, 'Learn together, shine together,' has been highly effective in ensuring that Christian distinctiveness is firmly at the core of all aspects of school life. This, along with the focus on their explicit Christian 'High 5 values': courage, compassion, trust, thankfulness and friendship, provide firm foundations for all aspects of school. 'We are all unique and special in our own little way,' one pupil explained and this was evident in relationships throughout the school and in the nurture, care and special provision made for the most vulnerable pupils.

The school's extensive focus on nurture and care is demonstrated in the commitment to pastoral support for families in need. One parent explained, 'I value school as a place of support, love and as part of my extended family.' This is evident in the pupils' confidence and enthusiasm for school life.

Pupils demonstrate great understanding of their Christian values through the confident way in which they talk about them and live them out across school life and in their local community. A parent explained the impact that this has at home; 'My son comes home and reads the Bible that school gave him.' The pupils know many Bible stories, but now need to deepen their understanding of how they can make a difference to their own lives. A pupil explained, 'We need to be like Daniel because he showed trust and courage in God and wouldn't give up.' The pupils are knowledgeable about world faiths and their understanding is enhanced through links with other schools. Pupils are excited and challenged by religious education (RE). Consequently, it makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual development of pupils and impacts well on their understanding of the diverse society in which we live.

The school grounds and building have been blessed and prayed upon during a special prayer walk to dedicate the whole school and those who work in it to God. The worship group and head teacher have been commissioned to carry out their work.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is inclusive, inspirational, valued by all and central to school life. Worship defines the ethos of the school and challenges everyone to aspire to live out its Christian values. Recent extensive focus on the school's 'High 5 values' has united the community after an unsettled period and has had a positive impact on behaviour and relationships on all levels.

Anglican prayers and responses are used confidently and provide a good structure to worship. The school has an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and proactive worship team, who have a clear vision for future development and provide accurate evaluation of worship. This has been a significant development since the last denominational inspection. Foundation governors acknowledge the seamless partnership that now exists between school and parish.

Pupils have an age-appropriate appreciation of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and speak confidently about having a relationship with God. Worship is creative, engaging and provides pupils with the opportunity to pray, reflect, learn and praise God. The vibrant approach to singing and praise during worship is particularly strong and unites the whole school community. Staff value the opportunity to worship on a daily basis as a school family and acknowledge the impact that this has on each individual and the daily life of the school. They acknowledge that this has been a significant improvement in the life of the school in recent years.

The prayer life of school is particularly strong and pupils and staff utilise the prayer room regularly. One visiting teacher explained; 'I am touched that I was able to come and pray during my working day and by the value that the school puts on prayer and faith.' Prayer spaces are available in each learning space, corridor and within the school grounds. The worship group explained; 'Sometimes there is not enough space to put all on the prayers that we want to say on the tree, so we need to find other ways of praying.'

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

Following a turbulent period, the school has now secured inspirational, passionate and dedicated Christian leadership that has improved all aspects of school life significantly since appointment. This now needs to be sustained, so that all pupils reach their full potential and that the school community can flourish. Attendance is improving due to the outreach and support now provided to families. Improvement in academic achievement is also evident, particularly in writing and maths. Staff are committed to school improvement and trust the Christian leadership of the school. Issues from the previous denominational inspection have been fully addressed and have had a significant impact on the Christian distinctiveness of the school, particularly concerning the implementation of a revised mission statement and vision, which is celebrated in vibrant displays around the school and on the website.

Highly effective and passionate leadership of worship and RE ensures that both areas maintain a high profile in school. Progress in RE has been rapid and pupils are challenged by thought provoking questions and creative approaches to teaching and learning.

Parents are supportive of the leadership of the school and this is evident in the most recent survey. They also value the Christian distinctiveness of the school, in particular in terms of the Christian values that it promotes.

Governors are actively involved in self-evaluation and the life of the school and provide appropriate challenge and support to the headteacher. Governors demonstrate a clear commitment to Christian leadership and succession planning, through its commitment to professional development for all staff and in recruitment procedures. Statutory requirements for worship and RE are met and both areas are given a high priority in school life, leading to highly effective practice. The headteacher aspires for the school to 'become a beacon on the hill to shine over the community that it serves.' Governors, staff, parents and pupils are now fully committed and have made significant strides to live out this aspiration.

SIAMS report June 2018, Holy Trinity CE (VC) School, Darwen, Lancashire, BB3 2RW