

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Christ Church Walshaw Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Walshaw, Bury BL8 3AX	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Manchester
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	June 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	Christ Church Church of England Multi-Academy Trust
Date of inspection	17 October 2017
Date of last inspection	October 2012 (as the former voluntary aided CofE primary school)
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy I44408
Headteacher	Ian Young
Inspector's name and number	Angela Knowles 497

School context

Christ Church Church of England Primary School formed its multi-academy trust in June 2017. The school is situated in the Walshaw area of Bury and is above the average size. The majority of its pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding is below the national average. The school was judged outstanding by Ofsted in March 2007 and is a National Teaching School led by the head teacher who is a National Leader of Education.

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

- The Christian ethos of the school is underpinned by strong relationships between all members of the school family with high academic standards which are driven by shared high expectations.
- The excellent behaviour of the pupils stems from the mutual respect and love they have for each other.
- Visionary leadership, which has ensured the school's success and expertise are shared with other schools in the local area and is underpinned by clear Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Expand the opportunities for the evaluating and monitoring of collective worship through the worship group, to include more regular feedback from the pupils.
- To introduce, embed and monitor the assessment of religious education (RE) in line with the new Diocesan Syllabus.

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

The ethos statement, adopted as the Trust was formed in June 2017, clearly highlights the school's historic foundation and religious character as a Church of England School. Its aim is to serve the community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. This statement is central to the process by which the school converted to an academy where this ethos can be shared with other schools. The trustees and senior leaders have a clear vision to provide all pupils in the area with an excellent education underpinned by distinct Christian values. The Trust vision is "grow together, learn forever". The values statement stems from Galatians 5 verses 22 and 23 where the fruit of the spirit are listed. These fruits are developed around the school's vision "Growing and learning together in Christ". This statement is displayed all around school, acting as a constant reminder of the school's Christian values. The website reflects the Christian foundation of the Trust and the importance of Christian values, faith and worship. Because of this all stakeholders articulate these values consistently and demonstrate them through very positive relationships, attitudes to worship and learning. Achievement across school is well above national averages at the end of each Key Stage and pupils make very good progress from their various starting points. Pupils' achievements are celebrated at every opportunity including the weekly Golden Book and Book of Praise assemblies. The Christian ethos of the school ensures pupils are eager and enthusiastic learners where tracking data ensures they make good progress and are supported when needed. The Questful syllabus for RE is well established and used effectively across school. This is being enhanced by the introduction of "Understanding Christianity" with training being delivered for teachers by the experienced curriculum lead during this academic year. The development of awe and wonder is encouraged at every opportunity using, for example, inspirational works of art. The pupils spoke knowledgeably about other faiths and gave many examples of what they had learnt from their studies. They felt they would like to visit more places of worship, for example a synagogue and a mosque, to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Attendance is well above national average and, because of the school's Christian ethos, is monitored closely with support offered to families when appropriate. Pupils behave well, supported by the consistent use of "Good to be Green" across school as a system for managing behaviour.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily act of collective worship is central to the life of the school. It provides many opportunities for the whole school family to come together during each week. At other times in the day each cohort can spend time listening, thinking and praying. Collective worship is coordinated by the head teacher who values and prioritises this time together. It is inclusive and carefully planned. Worship reflects the Christian values and vision of the school, incorporating biblical teaching and the liturgical calendar. The vicar and his wife, pupils, teaching staff and other visitors make regular contributions to the leading of worship. Worship is not restricted to one time in the day as seen in the lighting of the candle and prayer at the beginning of two RE lessons observed. Themes connected to the school's Christian values are also clearly reflected in and enhanced by the RE curriculum, making the links between worship and RE explicit. Each classroom has a reflection area where the whole school prayers are displayed with a cross and age-appropriate Bible. Each area is personalised by the class. For example, some had written prayers and Year 6 had made individual stained glass crosses with each colour they chose meaning something in their lives. Thinking and reflection is encouraged at every point of the day. Worship takes place in the parish church during major Christian festivals. Pupils speak descriptively about many of these services and can articulate some lasting memories and special moments they had experienced. The whole school act of worship observed was themed around the Christian value of thankfulness. Displays around the hall reflect other Christian values of the school. The worship began with the lighting of three candles representative of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the choir sang "Be a Candle of Hope" beautifully. Because the pupils enjoy taking part in the worship they responded well to questioning by the worship leader. Thinking was encouraged at various points in the worship including during an activity to recall the fruit of the Spirit. Music is a strength of the school and is used to build confidence and to channel emotions. This was reflected in the singing during worship which was enjoyed, thoughtful and of excellent quality with everyone joining in. The pupils spoke excitedly about their plans to help lead and plan worship for Advent. Monitoring and evaluation of worship already carried out by adults now needs to develop further with more regular feedback from the pupils.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The teaching of enquiry based RE is of the highest importance throughout school and is carefully timetabled and planned. The school follows the agreed diocesan syllabus for RE and staff have attended recent training to deliver the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. RE leaders are excited by these new developments and their plans to share them with staff are underway. During the lessons observed as part of the inspection, pupils were engaged and showed an enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils' behaviour for learning was excellent because they enjoy RE as an exciting core subject of their curriculum and because of this no learning time is lost. The teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge. The quality of teaching and learning is in line with that across other subjects and is at least good. Pupils achieve well and standards are high. Whilst the school is beginning to develop a robust and consistent assessment process for RE, this needs to be regarded as a priority. This is a priority for further development with the adoption of the revised syllabus. RE is led by an experienced and knowledgeable senior leader who demonstrates a real love for the subject. The monitoring of lessons and the scrutiny of work is well planned and executed. School's judgements are supported by lesson and work scrutinies carried out during the inspection. The marking of work follows the school's marking policy and includes clear next steps for learning and personal progress. The RE curriculum is enhanced by an exciting variety of activities. The teaching about other faiths is well established and the pupils show a good understanding of what others believe. This supports their knowledge about living in a multi-faith society, which was a focus for development from the last inspection. The floor books show creative and exciting instances where RE has been taught in other curriculum areas. Pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories and can relate them to which key messages they have for Christians, linking them to the school's Christian values.

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

The Christian distinctiveness of Christ Church Primary School as a Church of England school is explicit. Its Christian values run through every part of the school's life and act as its heartbeat. The school website articulates the vision and the values of the trust and ensures that this school is clear about its church school status. As the school formed the trust which it leads, the governing body ceased to exist and a board of trustees, who are actively involved, was formed. The leadership team clearly articulate their Christian vision for the school family and their ambition for the future. The academy trustees have worked with the staff and pupils to write the ethos statement and the trust's vision and its Christian values, resulting in them being 'owned' by all. Leadership ensures the RE and worship in school meets statutory requirements and their self-assessment is thorough, accurate and informative. Trustees and senior leaders ensure the school is an integral part of the community. Links with the church and its clergy are valued, effective and continually developing. Leaders and trustees, supported by parents, want the pupils to do well and ensure there are sufficient resources to do so. Academic standards in school are high but the leaders are not complacent. They work hard to maintain and improve outcomes for pupils, supported by the school's clear Christian values and ethos. Central to their Christian service, leaders play an important part in raising standards for other schools in the area. The school sees itself very much as a Christian family, willing and able to offer adults and pupils caring support during challenging times. The school works in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University to provide a primary initial teacher training PGCE programme. Students comment on the caring support and professional development offered and on the excellent guidance that they receive. Performance management is well embedded and supports the professional development of all staff within their roles or to take the next step on their career paths. The pupils also lead in school. They have many and varied opportunities to influence leadership decisions for example through the school council and as part of working groups. Most pupils are keen to be involved and wish that more of them could be on the school council. The pastoral care of the whole school family is rooted in Christian love. School works hard to ensure the links with parents remain strong. Parents feel welcome and comfortable to approach staff with any concerns. All members of the school family are overwhelmingly positive about the school and senior staff are proud to be its leaders.

SIAMS report October 2017 Christ Church Church of England VA Primary School Bury BL8 3AX