

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St. Cleopas Church of England Primary School

Beresford Road, Liverpool L8 4RP

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese**

**Liverpool**

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Liverpool

Date of inspection

23 May 2018

Date of last inspection

January 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary controlled 104613

Headteacher

Lynne Gannon

Inspector's name and number

Jean Forward 625

#### School context

St. Cleopas is an average-sized primary school with nursery provision, situated in an urban area of high social and economic disadvantage. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (40%) is well above the national average as is the percentage of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (18%). At the end of KS2 in 2017, the percentage of pupils reaching expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2017.

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

- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher, supported by committed staff and governors, ensures that the school's Christian distinctiveness and ethos are central to daily life and rooted in Christian values.
- The school demonstrates outstanding Christian service to its families, transforming lives through a deep sense of compassion and love.
- Relationships across the school community are extremely strong and have their foundation in the school's Christian ethos. As a result, every individual is valued and supported as a child of God.
- Worship is inspirational and central to the life of the school. It sets Christian values in their biblical context and includes major festivals. As a result, worship enriches the spiritual life of all members of the school family.

#### Areas to improve

- Clarify the school's vision in order to enable all members of the St. Cleopas community to identify and articulate the distinctive Christian foundation which inspires its current mission and future aspirations.

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

St. Cleopas is a special place of Christian love and service. The school's ethos is deeply Christian and demonstrates strong commitment to enabling all pupils to do their best academically, spiritually and personally. The school's core Christian values are embedded and consistently practised. They are a thread which runs through every aspect of the school's life. A high level of pastoral care and encouragement is directly linked to the Christian life experienced by all members of the school community. Pupils are able to talk about the importance of the school's Christian values in their daily life. A Year 6 pupil said, 'Christian values help us to move forward in life and take the right path.' Pupils believe that friendship is a 'top priority' in the life of the school. As a result, there is a strong sense that they know how to make the school community happy and harmonious through their behaviour and attitudes towards one another.

The positive relationships across the school are rooted in a Christ-centred approach and enable everyone to flourish. All members of the community know they are valued and the ethos of Christian trust and respect is clearly evident. Pupils say that their teachers support and reassure them and that they can always ask for help or advice. A pupil said, 'We can always say when we don't understand something.' Staff also speak of the ways in which the Christian ethos of the school supports them professionally and personally.

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is central to the school's work. Individual needs are being met through a balanced and creative curriculum and a wide range of intervention strategies. Pupils have access to a variety of extra-curricular activities which broaden their experience and help to develop teamwork and social skills. Pupils enjoy being members of the school council and worship council because this enables them to demonstrate Christian service within and beyond the school. The school has a commitment to Christian stewardship through its support of many charities including Christian Aid, Tearfund and the local foodbank. The school also supports the St. Cleopas café which is run by the church to help the homeless and disadvantaged. Pupils recognise the value of showing generosity to those in need and they are able to explain that this is rooted in the teaching and life of Jesus.

Pupils are happy and enthusiastic about learning and school life. This is affirmed by parents who say that the school's core Christian values have a positive influence on their children's behaviour and attitude to others. Displays, Christian symbols and artefacts proclaim the school's Christian character and prompt the pupils' spiritual awareness extremely well. Pupils value the reflection areas in classrooms and corridors and say that they can use them at any time when they need to be quiet or to write a prayer. These areas always focus on the current Christian value and provide reminders and encouragement as pupils go about their daily lives.

The school widens pupils' knowledge of non-Christian faiths through well planned religious education (RE), including visits to places of worship and visitors from other faiths. This contributes well to pupils' understanding of diversity and to positive attitudes about our multi-cultural society. A pupil said, 'We see religion from different perspectives and can show respect.' An awareness of Christianity as a worldwide faith is promoted through the curriculum.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and inspires the whole community. Pupils enjoy worship and engage well with a real sense of coming together to be with God. Acts of worship follow a clear pattern and responses for gathering and dismissal are used in classroom worship across the school, including in the nursery. Pupils sing with confidence and music is used carefully to create an appropriate atmosphere. This approach gives pupils a sense of liturgical structure and familiarity.

Worship themes are planned carefully to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of biblical teaching, Christian values and the major festivals and seasons of the Christian calendar. Each half term's theme is based on a Christian value and this ensures that pupils are able to link the values to the life of Jesus and their own lives. Members of the teaching staff, the vicar and ministry team from the parish and pupils lead worship on a weekly basis. The pupils enjoy these varied worship experiences which broaden their understanding of Christian teaching and tradition. Prayer and reflection have a central role in all worship and pupils know that it is a way of being still and close to God. Pupils' understanding of the meaning and purpose of prayer is developed further through the classroom and outdoor reflection areas and the use of the Lord's Prayer and school prayer. Members of staff say that worship supports their spiritual life and that they take strength from worshipping together with the pupils.

The school worships in the church on a monthly basis and for major festivals. This gives pupils a greater sense of being part of the wider Christian family. They plan and lead worship independently for classroom worship and do so with confidence and a true sense of spiritual insight. Effective systems for monitoring and evaluating worship are in place and contribute to future development. Individual class reflection books provide the opportunity for pupils to express their opinions and ideas and this enables them to feel fully involved. Pupils have an appropriate age-related understanding of the nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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

Highly effective leadership drives everything the school does to develop and promote its Christian distinctiveness. The work of the headteacher, staff and governors is clearly based on Christian principles and values, although this is not always articulated clearly in terms of vision for the future. They are determined that every pupil will have the opportunity to thrive and feel safe and secure in a loving environment. Staff are committed to fostering all aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being through Christian care and love. In doing so, they recognise the importance of creating a Christian environment which supports effective learning and equal opportunities.

The school knows its pupils and their families extremely well and meets individual needs through a culture of unconditional Christian compassion. The school's involvement with many outside agencies underpins the way in which it puts faith into social action. It ensures that when the most vulnerable families are in distress, the school can be a Christian presence and support. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian character of the school and believe that it contributes to pupils' sense of security and readiness to learn. They say that the school is 'a truly spiritual place and at the heart of the community'. As a result, it is clear that every need is being met through the school's nurturing approach. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the daily life of the school and this strengthens relationships. The school has extremely strong links with St. Cleopas church. The parish priest is a visible presence in the school, giving pastoral support as well as a commitment through leading worship. The school and parish work together on many events and this reinforces the school's involvement in the community. The school's Christian values are taken into the life of the church and enrich the partnership.

Members of the governing body are well-informed and dedicated. They ask challenging questions and provide a high level of support which enhances the effectiveness of leadership. They have made careful decisions to ensure that the school gives pupils the very best start in their education. Action plans for church school distinctiveness are included in the school's development planning. A designated governor monitors all aspects of the school's Christian character. In this way, governors are fully informed about and involved in the Christian development of the school.

The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. The extremely capable RE and collective worship leader monitors teaching and learning through observations, book scrutiny and tracking of progress. She provides strong leadership and support which encourage staff and enhances the quality of teaching and learning and worship provision. The school is outward-looking and is involved in improvement activities with its local cluster. A strong partnership with the diocese through discussion and training has contributed to the development of leadership and the enhancement of provision for RE and worship. These initiatives exemplify the school's determination to learn and to provide Christian service as a strong community presence.

SIAMS report May 2018 St. Cleopas Church of England Primary School, Liverpool L8 4RP