



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Simonstone St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

School Lane,  
Simonstone  
Burnley  
BB12 7HR

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: Blackburn**

Local authority: Lancashire  
Dates of inspection: 5 March 2015  
Date of last inspection: 27 May 2010  
School's unique reference number: 119428  
Acting Headteacher: Mrs Christine Smith  
Inspector's name and number: Gail Goodman (571)

#### **School context**

Simonstone St Peter's is a smaller than average primary school of 122 pupils. This village school draws its pupils locally, and from a nearby urbanisation. Almost all pupils are white European. The headteacher is currently employed as an Interim Head at another school. The acting headteacher has led the school since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. Ofsted inspectors appraised the school in October 2014. St Peter's Church is situated directly across the road from the school. The church minister retired in April 2014.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Simonstone St Peter's as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The Christian value of God's love through care and compassion, inspire the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners.
- The impact of collective worship in inspiring the thinking and day to day actions of the whole school community.
- Highly effective teaching of Religious Education (RE) leads to outstanding levels of spiritual development.
- The Christian leadership of the school is outstanding with staff and governors continually reviewing and developing its Christian vision.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Strengthen, and create further partnerships, to develop pupils' wider, global understanding and an awareness of Christianity as a multi cultural world faith.
- Explore opportunities to give greater involvement to pupils in planning, leading and evaluating acts of worship.

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

The Christian character clearly informs the ethos, values and decisions in St Peter's school. All adults and pupils respect each other, are cared for and nurtured to reach their full potential. All members of the school community are aware of these values and recognise their impact within a rich curriculum and the outstanding educational provision at this school. One teacher said, 'all learners openly live their active faith'. And, 'this is an invisible glue that joins the whole community together'. This is reinforced and demonstrated by the excellent relationships between all learners. This Christian distinctiveness has a significant impact on the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of all pupils. Parents are highly supportive of the school, as evidenced in recent questionnaires. One parent commented, 'all adults act as role models for children. This is an environment where love, care and security, associated with God's care, allow the children to develop into responsible grown-ups'. This is borne out by the high levels of academic achievement, attendance, and behaviour. The personal development of all learners, regardless of their ability or background, is outstanding, exemplified through pupils making higher than expected, progress throughout the school in both Maths and English. School children benefit from a variety of links, including a school in Guyana, and others, established through the Church Cluster Group and Blackburn Diocese. One pupil commented, 'We help each other, and are free to speak about our religion, troubles – anything – to adults'. Strong relationships are highly influenced by the Christian character and values of the school. The chair of governors explained, 'we work with other schools in the community to give a complete 'roundedness' to all faiths'. This is evident in all pupils' actively living out tolerance, friendship, humility and respect, on a daily basis, and older children acting as 'buddies', to younger pupils. One parent commented, upon the school's ethos and values in recognising diversity in a multi cultural world. He explained, 'Simonstone St Peter's, as a faith school, is encouraging children to do their best - developing a generation of responsible, well behaved and loving citizens'.

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

Collective worship permeates all aspects of school life. It is engaging, relevant and central to the ethics and values of the school. Worship is effectively planned by the acting headteacher. The themes inspire reflection in all learners and fully reflect the Christian calendar. This enables everyone to encounter a wide range of Anglican tradition and practice. Children and staff take an active part in worship, and speak very positively about its significant value. Parents attend celebration worship regularly, including a termly Eucharist and annual festivals. Members of the church community attend these Services. At the act of worship observed, all children behaved exceptionally well. They show a real interest and reverence for messages relevant to their own lives. They listened attentively, answered questions willingly and participated enthusiastically in song, prayer and reflection. As an example, the children were asked to think about God creating the world. Additionally, the theme included everyone working together to do their little bit, in making a big difference to others. Prayer and reflection has a high focus. Pupils select and write prayers, choosing appropriate hymns. Children are encouraged to contribute their own responses to the Prayer Tree in school. These prayers are shared within the school community, and used in Church services. This exemplifies the strong link with St Peter's Church. Since the local minister retired, further links have been forged with the church wardens, one of whom is the Chair of Governors. There is a clear structure in place for the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. All learners take part in annual questionnaires and regular worship evaluations. Children have limited opportunity to plan and lead worship. These include such events as Red Nose Day and Children in Need. One Year 6 child explained, 'We are always kind to each other – we help everyone in need'.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Religious education (RE) has a high profile within the school curriculum. Excellent teaching

and rigorous assessment ensure standards are exceptionally high. It is given full status as a core subject with high levels of attainment and progression. This is evidenced across both Key Stages. In the lesson observed, Year 5/6 pupils were asked to describe Jesus in different ways. They gave excellent examples of 'Jesus as the Shepherd', as 'the Lamb of God', and as 'the King of the Jews'. This linked back, effectively, to previous work. These themes related to Baptism, the Son of God, 'I am the Gate', and the Last Supper. Pupils were able to relate their ideas, and make links, with the Easter story and Christian beliefs about Jesus. Further, they reflected upon the impact of religion on people's lives. The lesson was active and creative, using art, drama and guided visualisation. Children are able to apply their knowledge and skills in RE to their own personal reflections. RE books showed self reflection and mature ideas. These included descriptions of pupils' own personal beliefs and understanding of world faiths. One Year 5 child was asked to explain her thoughts behind 'Jesus, the Light of the World'. She, confidently, stated that, 'In times of darkness, Jesus guides us back to the Light'. The school community is taking an active part in the use of the new Blackburn RE Syllabus. Diocesan training has been very effective for all governors. The acting headteacher, as RE co-ordinator, is highly effective in supporting and challenging staff to constantly improve their practice. She meets with the RE governor who compiles progress reports for the governing body and assists in evaluation and further planning. The RE curriculum is rich and varied and meets statutory requirements. The teaching of Christianity is given prominence. Opportunities for partnerships are being developed to give children a wider understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith, including partnerships with link schools. Pupils really enjoy their RE lessons, as evidenced by the many effective and thought provoking displays around school. Additionally, they say that, in their RE lessons, 'We can always ask the teacher for advice and help – he doesn't like to see us struggle'.

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

The explicit Christian vision is demonstrated in the warmth of relationships throughout the school population. The acting headteacher, staff and governors share Christian values. True expression to their faith shines out in every aspect of serving others. Their vision of the school, as a Christian school, is reflected by one parent. 'It's a friendly, family environment that promotes Christian values, nurturing learning, and respect for each other'. Highly valued governors sustain the school as 'critical friends', and make visits to support learning. The chair of governors actively supports the school through regular visits. As a church warden he also leads collective worship. This further demonstrates the commitment to support the acting headteacher and staff in developing the distinctive Christian vision for the school. The foundation governors are visible in school. All issues raised by the last SIAS inspection have been successfully addressed. There has been significant progress in developing the school's website: communications with parents are improved; school and worship councils are enthusiastically led by pupils from all year groups. In addition, effective evaluation and assessment by learners and rigorous tracking is in place. This is evidenced by a clear cycle of school improvement, including regular pupils' progress interviews. Governors are highly experienced in monitoring and evaluating performance and achievement. There is an active link with Diocesan clergy and the retiring minister of St Peter's. Pupils recognise the importance of their school logo, showing the Lancashire Rose and crossed keys. Members of the school council were able to relate the significance back to the school's mission statement of, 'keys to faith and knowledge'. Many charities have benefitted from the school's generosity. Many events are organised by a proactive parent group, Friends of Simonstone School.

SIAMS report March 2015 Simonstone St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, School Lane, Simonstone, Burnley, BB12 7HR