



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Westleigh St Paul's Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

School Street
Leigh
Lancashire
WN7 5JN

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Wigan

Dates of inspection: 21st May 2014

Date of last inspection: 2nd April 2009

School's unique reference number: 106481

Headteacher: Mrs J Hankinson

Inspector's name and number: Gail Fullbrook 530

School context

Westleigh St Paul's is a smaller than average primary school with 200 pupils on roll. The majority of children are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The percentage of children known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average as is the number of children with special educational needs. There are high levels of pupil mobility due to families moving in and away from the local area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Westleigh St Paul's as a Church of England school are good

- Distinctively Christian values impact positively on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children grow and develop in a Christian family environment where faith is nurtured and where they feel accepted and valued.
- The skill of Christian reflection, developed effectively within worship, enables children to recognise the importance of taking time to reflect on their own actions and those of others.

Areas to improve

- The school should seek to develop the range of evidence of children's responses recorded in religious education (RE) so that progress can be effectively monitored and used to inform future planning.
- To develop the effectiveness of the governance of the school as a church school, governors should systematically and regularly review the work of the school as a church school and create opportunities to gain regular feedback from parents and the children.

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

This is a school where children grow in a loving, family environment, where faith is nurtured and where clear Christian values are known and understood. Children are happy and feel safe and enjoy the quality of the environment their teachers create for them. They are excited by their learning and make good progress. The senior leadership team and governors talk of being 'driven' to ensure that no child gets left behind in their learning and the focus is very much upon meeting the needs of individual children academically, socially and emotionally. For example a parent spoke of a time when she had shared a concern and commented that the school was 'marvellously accommodating' in its response. School values are distinctively Christian and are understood and recognised by children and parents alike. Children are encouraged to make links between biblical teaching and their own behaviour and to approach people of other faiths and cultures with curiosity and interest. The school's motto, "Working together and playing together", is demonstrated in the range of experiences and opportunities offered both within and beyond the school's curriculum. Distinctively Christian wall displays allow children to share their interests and achievements and encourage reflection using 'What if' questions such as, 'What if the disciples hadn't responded to Jesus' teaching?' as well as celebrating their work. Children show a respect for their local environment through their care for the school's nature area and their involvement in keeping their local area litter free. They know the difference between right and wrong but show compassion when people make mistakes. The children understand the importance of being good team members and are forgiving when their peers behave in ways that they feel are wrong. Teaching about other faiths includes a focus on cultural diversity and children recognise this diversity within their own community as well as globally. Relationships are a strength of the school and parents recognise the distinctiveness of the school as a church school in its engagement with them. They are keen to stress that the staff team, led by the highly respected headteacher, listen carefully and are committed to finding ways forward that are in the best interests of the children. Links with the church are strong and members of the congregation are keen to pray for and learn about their church school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Distinctively Christian collective worship incorporates biblical teaching alongside a focus on specific Christian values. Collective worship is well planned and plays a central role in the life of the school. Children regularly read from the Bible, lead prayer and take part in activities supporting the worship theme. The atmosphere during the worship observed was one of respect and enjoyment. Liturgical responses are used and when worship takes place in church, a traditional Anglican pattern of worship is followed. Times for reflection are appreciated by the children and carried out within an atmosphere of stillness and silence. They recognise the importance of prayer and value the time it gives to think about things that are important to them. Children can articulate God as being Father, Son and Holy Spirit and understand the Trinity as a way of telling us about different parts of God's being. They explore the person of Jesus Christ both within worship and religious education lessons. Worship is planned and led by different members of the school family including children. Children enjoy the variety of styles of worship offered and the different responses each demands. Singing, a focus of praise worship, is particularly strong. Children have a developing understanding of the seasons of the church year and of major Christian festivals. They can articulate times when worship has led them to reflect on aspects of their own lives. Children and adults are regularly given a thought to ponder during the day and enjoy sharing their response with friends and teachers. Worship is evaluated by those who lead worship, by the RE coordinators and by visitors to the school. Feedback from evaluation influences future planning. The school recognises the importance of developing their approach to evaluating worship to include feedback from the children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Children make good progress across all subject areas from below national average starting points. Progress in RE is in line with that of other subject areas. Children enjoy RE and respond carefully and thoughtfully to the subject. Questioning is used effectively to deepen understanding within lessons although it is not as well used when responding to the children's work through marking. Teaching is well differentiated allowing all children to make progress in terms of their knowledge and understanding of faiths studied. The children have a secure knowledge of important aspects of Christianity and the Bible. They have a developing understanding of the ways in which these impact on the lives of Christians although in some year groups opportunities are sometimes missed to deepen this understanding. Children have a good knowledge of the main practices and beliefs of the other faiths that they study. They are given some creative opportunities to respond to knowledge gained. For example in year 2 children create dances to the Jewish dreidel song and in year 6 children are encouraged to explore religious works of art and to respond to them. The children's workbooks are well presented although evidence of discussion and of more creative responses through art, dance and drama are not always recorded within them. This is something the school intends to address in the near future. Understanding of key Christian values is developed within RE lessons and often draws upon recent worship themes. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strengthened as children learn more about their own faith and the faiths and cultures of others. Classroom display and displays around the school give encouragement to children to reflect on particular stories and the school is developing the use of 'What if...' questions to deepen thinking. Opportunities to continue to explore RE are given in the Bible Crafts Club which has recently been introduced where children respond to a story through art. The monitoring of RE is developing and lessons are now routinely observed and workbooks scrutinised. Feedback is given to staff to ensure that issues identified are addressed and successes are celebrated. Subject leaders, new to their role in September 2013, have good plans to develop their impact. Opportunities for professional development are regularly given and the school has good plans for governors to be routinely kept in touch with developments in the ways in which RE is taught and of standards attained.

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

The distinctively Christian ethos of the school is understood and appreciated by all stakeholders. Adults effectively model the Christian vision of the school and children respond to the challenge it offers to be loving and caring for and of each other. Adults care deeply for the children and parents talk of times where the school has responded in caring and purposeful ways to concerns about their child's academic development or emotional well-being. The school's curriculum is rich and varied and the quality of the school environment is one of care and welcome. The school regularly evaluates its provision and impact as a church school and action plans are drawn up to guide future developments. Formal procedures whereby the findings of self-evaluation and the implementation of agreed actions are discussed with governors are not yet in place. Questionnaires seeking feedback on a range of aspects of school life show a high level of support for the school but do not currently offer an opportunity to comment upon the Christian character of school. Issues raised in the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Leadership of RE is developing. Effective monitoring has enabled them to identify areas where teaching and learning can be developed and strengthened. The collective worship team is effectively led by the headteacher and supported by the parish priest. The school is aware of its responsibility to provide professional development for aspects of the work of the school as a church school and staff have recently received training on their provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. A teacher has just completed the Aspiring to Leadership course. The school enjoys good support from Reverend Judith, the parish priest, and from neighbouring clusters of schools, including church school clusters. Relationships with parents are strong and much appreciated by parents.