

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Halebank Church of England Primary School

Heathview Road, Halebank WA8 8UZ	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Liverpool
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Halton
Date of inspection	4 May 2017
Date of last inspection	June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary controlled 111244
Interim headteacher	Emma Fenton
Inspector's name and number	Jean Forward 625

School context

Halebank C of E Primary School is below average in size and is situated in an urban area on the outskirts of Widnes. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average. The percentage of those identified as having additional needs is below the national average. At the end of KS2 in 2016, pupils' progress in reading, writing and maths was at the national average. The school moved into a new building in 2016 and currently has a part-time interim headteacher.

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

- The strong leadership of the interim headteacher and her Christian commitment to the development of the school ensure that church school distinctiveness and ethos are central to daily life.
- The school creates a loving, secure and inclusive environment rooted in Christian values. This has a direct influence on pupils' well-being, happiness and positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is rooted in the school's Christian ethos and commitment to Christian values. As a result, pupils become increasingly confident in their social skills, understanding of faith and their awareness of the wider world and its needs.
- Worship is central to the school's daily life. It sets Christian values in their biblical context and has a positive influence on the spiritual development of the school family.

Areas to improve

- Improve procedures for governors to monitor and evaluate church school distinctiveness through more formal and focused activities that ensure they are well informed and actively involved in the strategic development process.
- Involve all members of the school community in more formal and recorded self-evaluation of worship to further enhance its quality and influence on the daily life of the school.

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

The school demonstrates a strong level of commitment to its Christian ethos and the development of every child. High expectations and encouragement are directly linked to the Christian life experienced by all members of the school community. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of the school's Christian values in their daily life and understand that these 'come from God'. As a result, the positive relationships across the community are rooted in a Christ-centred approach. Pupils make good progress, often from starting points below national expectations. Pupils' SMSC development is central to the school's work and ensures that individual needs are being met through a balanced and creative curriculum. Pupils have access to a wide range of additional activities which broaden their experience and develop teamwork and social skills. Consequently, pupils flourish, feel safe and develop high levels of self-esteem. Their behaviour is extremely good. All members of the community know they are valued and the ethos of Christian respect is clearly evident. A pupil said, 'There is no bullying in this school because we care and respect one another.' Pupils enjoy being team captains and members of the school council and road safety team. They understand that this is an opportunity to demonstrate Christian service in and beyond the school. This is demonstrated in a commitment to Christian stewardship through the school's support of a range of charities, locally and internationally. Pupils recognise the importance of showing generosity to those in need. Pupils are able to share their concerns with staff knowing that these will be addressed in a caring way. A pupil said, 'We trust our teachers and they know that they can trust us to be kind and caring.' Children are happy and enthusiastic about learning and school life and this is affirmed by parents. They also say that the school's core Christian values have a positive influence on their children's respect for and loyalty towards one another. Displays, Christian symbols and artefacts emphasise the school's Christian character and prompt the pupils' spiritual awareness extremely well. Pupils value the classroom reflection areas and are able to explain that these support them spiritually and are an aid to prayer. The school widens pupils' knowledge of non-Christian faiths through the Religious Education (RE) curriculum. This contributes well to cultural knowledge and to positive attitudes. The RE subject leader is relatively new to her role but already provides strong leadership and support which encourages staff and enhances the quality of teaching and learning. The school's Christian care for and commitment to every child and family secure positive outcomes. Nurturing and family support for the most vulnerable are clearly rooted in compassion and love.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

All members of the school community recognise the importance of collective worship and the central part it plays in the life of the school. The headteacher is the school's worship co-ordinator and she emphasises the importance of introducing pupils to biblical teaching and an understanding of the life and work of Jesus. Pupils enjoy worship and participate enthusiastically whilst maintaining a due sense of reverence. A pupil said, 'I am proud to believe in God.' Acts of worship follow a clear pattern which gives the children a sense of liturgical structure and familiarity. Anglican responses for gathering and dismissal are used every day. Worship themes are planned carefully and include biblical teaching, major festivals and Christian values. This focus on Christian values ensures that pupils are able to link the school's core values of love, friendship, thankfulness, peace, faith, love, hope, justice and respect to biblical teaching and daily life. The headteacher, members of the teaching staff and the vicar of St. Mary's, Hale lead worship. The pupils enjoy these varied worship experiences which broaden their understanding of Christian teaching and Anglican tradition. Prayer and reflection have a central role in all worship and pupils understand that it is a way of talking and being close to God. Pupils' awareness of the meaning and purpose of prayer is developed further through the classroom reflection areas which are used as a focus for class worship. They are involved in worship through music, drama and reading, especially when celebrating major festivals. The school's tradition of celebrating a Eucharist for Easter brings all members of the community together in a powerful way. Pupils in Y6 always work with the vicar to prepare for this special event and their involvement enhances understanding of the key elements of Anglican worship. Older pupils speak confidently about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Currently, there are no formal systems for all members of the school community to monitor and evaluate worship.

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

Effective Christian leadership is now driving everything the school does to develop and promote its Christian distinctiveness. The interim headteacher has become highly respected in a short time. Parents speak of the support and welcome they receive from all members of the staff team and stress that relationships are extremely positive. The headteacher and governing body have a clear and strong vision for the school based on Christian principles and values. This is rooted in a determination that the school will serve every pupil and family and that all will be made welcome. Members of the governing body ask informed questions and provide a good level of challenge. They are dedicated and have the school's best interests at heart. However, action plans for church school distinctiveness need to be reviewed in a more focused way in order to take the school forward. Staff are committed to fostering

all areas of pupils' development and well-being through Christian care and love. In doing so, they recognise the importance of creating a Christian ethos which supports effective learning and equal opportunities. This demonstrates the way in which the school puts faith into social action. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian character of the school and believe that it contributes to their children's sense of security and readiness to learn. A parent said, 'The school teaches children to be resilient and develop life-skills.' Parents are encouraged to be involved in the daily life of the school and they contribute in many ways. As a result, they feel valued and part of the school's daily life. The school and members of St. Mary's church work together on a number of events which strengthen the school's involvement in the wider community. Holiday clubs and sports ministry also bring school and church together in a mutually beneficial way. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship and areas for development from the previous inspection have been addressed. The school is outward-looking and is involved in school improvement activities with another church school. This is supporting the work of the interim headteacher as she extends the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

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