

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

### St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School

Ellis Ashton Street, Huyton Quarry, Knowsley, L36 6BH	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Liverpool</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Knowsley
Date of inspection	24 January 2017
Date of last inspection	23 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 104452
Headteacher	Kate Sawyer
Inspector's name and number	Gail Fullbrook 530

#### School context

St Gabriel's school is a smaller than average sized primary school. The neighbourhood served by the school is an area of significant deprivation. Pupils are predominantly of White British origin although the proportion of pupils from other cultures, including those who are refugees or asylum seekers, is increasing. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals or who have a special educational need or disability, is higher than the national average. The headteacher was appointed substantive headteacher in September 2014, having served as acting headteacher since September 2013. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2015.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Gabriel's as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian character supports all aspects of school life. This is widely acknowledged and valued by staff and parents and by the pupils themselves. As a result the school is a purposeful and happy community.
- Worship is a valued and important aspect of the school day. Pupils enjoy the time it provides for them to meet together, to pray and to learn.
- The partnership between school and church is seamless. This supports the pupil's spiritual development and leads to a clear sense of belonging to the church community in Huyton Quarry.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop current procedures for self-evaluation of the school as a church school to include staff, governors, parents and pupils. This will support the school in recognising what it does well and guide future developments.
- Review the school's approach to teaching about other faiths in order to widen the pupil's knowledge and understanding of the ways in which faith has impact on the lives of believers.

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

At St Gabriel's the personal development and well-being of pupils and their families is central to the school's distinctively Christian ethos and vision. The headteacher, supported by staff and governors, recognises that it is when pupils are happy and healthy that they learn well. As a result pupils make good progress, particularly in maths and reading, and attain well. The school's approach to issues of attendance or punctuality is supportive and appropriately focused. Parents are appreciative of the work of the learning mentor and welcome her ability to signpost them to local support groups and agencies when necessary. The school recognises the importance of the pupil's achievements, both within school life and in out of school activities. These are celebrated weekly in Praise Worship.

The school's core Christian values are widely known and understood. Understanding of the values is developed within worship and through religious education (RE). They are brought to life through references made to them across the curriculum and in the wider life of the school. Pupils have a developing understanding of the stories of Jesus which underpin each value. They are keen to share examples of times when their behaviour has been influenced by their understanding of the Christian values. For example, a Year 5 boy referred to the story of Zacchaeus when thinking about the importance of being willing to change when he had done something wrong. A wide range of visits and extra-curricular activities support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Year 6 pupils enjoy helping to serve lunch to elderly members of their community each month and the school choir enjoy singing at local homes for the elderly and at social events.

Relationships are a strength of the school and parents and staff make reference to the supportive nature of the school family. Parents say that staff listen attentively and report that they are confident that when concerns are shared, they will be quickly addressed. Pupils behave well and show respect to adults. They are keen to learn and delight in sharing their skills and knowledge. Pupils have a deep respect for their friends from different cultures or faith backgrounds. They enjoy learning of the experience of others and quickly identify shared interests. This helps pupils to settle in when they join the school. Pupils are developing an understanding of the ways in which Christians across the world live and worship.

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

Daily worship is a highlight of the day for many pupils. They enjoy learning about the life of Jesus and the stories of the Old Testament. They say that they learn about people from other parts of the world in worship and that this helps them to be good friends to their classmates from other cultures. Pupils sing with enthusiasm. They are keen to discuss favourite hymns and to share what they mean to them. Worship is distinctively Christian and well-chosen stories and songs support the pupils' SMSC development.

Pupils recognise the importance of prayer to Christians. Their spiritual development is supported by times of prayer, both within worship and during the school day. They are familiar with the importance of taking personal time to think and pray. All teaching areas include a space where prayer is encouraged. However the school is aware that pupils do not always find the areas interesting or inviting. Pupils have a good and age appropriate understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They share their thoughts on the person of Jesus with enthusiasm. A Year 5 girl talked with wonder of what it must have felt like to be God's son. Another child talked of Jesus as a kind and trusting friend.

Worship is well planned and reflects the major festivals of the church year. A range of people from the school and church community lead worship. The role of pupils in planning and leading worship has increased since the last inspection where it was identified as a focus for development. Pupils worship in church each week and have an awareness of a range of Anglican practices. Older pupils learn about Eucharistic worship within RE lessons. The school keeps a record of comments made, either in a written form or orally, about worship. However, procedures for the routine monitoring of the delivery and impact of worship on the lives of the pupils, are not yet in place. As a result the impact of some acts of worship is not as strong as it could be.

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

Pupils enjoy RE lessons and are keen to share their thoughts and responses to themes studied. As a result they achieve age appropriate standards by the end of KS2 and make good progress. Teachers have a good understanding of the syllabus and lessons are often highly creative and engaging. Pupils enjoy opportunities to reflect on big and important questions and the responses of older pupils show significant depth of understanding. A wide range of skills such as enquiry, interpretation and evaluation are developed within RE and pupils have a good knowledge of the themes studied. Year 6 pupils explore what it is to be human through music and Biblical verse. Their responses are thoughtful and relevant. Pupils shared thoughts such as, 'If you want to say something important you need to think about what you are saying and how you say it,' and 'Why do we always blame others and not sort things out

for ourselves?’

Christian values are reinforced within RE lessons and one child, when asked what God would like to see in our hearts, reflected that he would want to see the school’s Christian values. SMSC development is integral to RE. The pupils’ knowledge of other faiths, a focus for development at the last inspection, is not yet sufficiently well developed for pupils to achieve age appropriate standards by the end of Year 6.

The teacher responsible for RE offers good leadership. Manageable assessment procedures provide accurate information about pupil progress and attainment. Through attendance at local and diocesan RE training she ensures that teachers are well informed about current developments in RE and have the knowledge they need to teach RE well. In turn, governors and senior leaders are kept informed about achievement and standards through regular reports and discussions.

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

The headteacher, supported by staff and governors, has a clear vision for the school based on Christian principles and values. The school’s distinctive character is widely promoted and is recognised and understood by parents and pupils. Christian values are fundamental to the life of the school and parents appreciate the moral compass this provides for pupils as they grow into adulthood. The school knows its pupils well and gives them every opportunity to succeed. The curriculum provided is relevant and interesting and as a consequence pupils enjoy their learning and show good attitudes to their work.

Procedures to guide the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school are not yet sufficiently embedded. Consequently senior leaders and governors do not always have an accurate understanding of key areas for development. For example, some areas identified for development at inspection in 2012 have not been fully addressed and are currently not identified for action within the school’s self-evaluation document. As a consequence, governors do not always have the information needed to guide them when holding the school to account for its effectiveness as a church school.

The school provides good professional development for senior staff for their roles within a church school. Governors recognise their responsibility to nurture and identify future Christian leaders. The statutory requirements for worship and RE are fulfilled. Links with the Diocese of Liverpool are good and a planned link with a community in Africa will serve to bring greater depth to the pupils’ understanding of the global nature of Christianity. Strong and effective links with the church community, and the high profile of the vicar and school chaplain, bring breadth and depth to the school’s Christian foundation. Parents particularly value the high profile of the vicar within the school. The school chaplain leads the school’s Christian Action Team which is currently developing ways of deepening pupils understanding of core Christian values.

Parents refer to the school as being welcoming and open. They say that the relationships they have with staff give them confidence to ask questions and seek help when appropriate. They recognise that the school goes above and beyond what might be expected in this respect.

SIAMS report January 2017 St Gabriel’s CE Primary School, Huyton Quarry, Knowsley L36 6BH