



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Little Sutton Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School	Berwick Road, Little Sutton, South Wirral, CH66 4PP
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Date of inspection	6 October 2016
Date of last inspection	April 2011
School's unique reference number	111275
Headteacher	Jo Pitchford
Inspector's name and number	Mike Graham 286

School context

Little Sutton CofE Primary School is of below average size, and serves a residential district in a suburb of Ellesmere Port. Most of the children are from the surrounding area, and from White British backgrounds. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of children eligible for additional government funding to support their learning. Since the last report two assistant headteachers have been appointed from the senior staff following a strong recommendation from Ofsted.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Sutton Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The committed Christian leadership of the headteacher is strongly supported by the leadership team, staff and governors. The Christian values that inspire and underpin the vision are lived, not just taught, and the children follow this lead. This gives security and confidence that result in good academic achievement, and mature Christian relationships throughout the school family.
- Worship is central in the school's life. It is sincere and relevant and sets the school's Christian values in their biblical context, making a significant impact on the spiritual development of the whole school family.
- The high quality of teaching and learning in religious education (RE) makes an invaluable contribution to the Christian character of the school.
- The excellent Christian care given to every child, and their families when appropriate, gives security and enables everyone to give of their best for themselves and for others.

Areas to improve

- To develop the children's understanding of Christian values, linking these values clearly to the teachings and life of Jesus, so that the vision is more clearly linked to Biblical Christian teachings.
- To strengthen further the relationships between school and church so that the children's Christian understanding of the breadth and variety of worship is deepened.
- Explore more fully Christian beliefs about the Holy Spirit, as the third member of the Trinity, so that children have a better understanding of the language of Christian worship.

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

All children are given a warm welcome into this inclusive Christian family. They are loved and cherished and this care is extended to their families when appropriate. The caring ethos, firmly based on Christian values, enables each child to give of their best, with no fear about making mistakes. These values are exemplified and taught by the staff and lived by all members of the school family, creating a trusting and respectful atmosphere. As a result, the children are enthusiastic and secure learners. This leads to academic progress in EYFS and KSI that is good overall, with results in Year 6 showing progress through school broadly in line with national expectations. Children with special needs are supported with sensitivity and skill, so that their progress is also good. The Christian character of the school inspires excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good to outstanding teaching in RE includes work on other major world faiths. Studies of other cultures include visitors who share customs and practices, giving children a broad perspective. As a Year 6 boy said, 'Everybody has a different belief, and we must respect that'. Relationships between all members of the school family demonstrate Christian values superbly. There is a strong sense of mutual respect and support for one another. The staff are outstanding role models, a good example being the apology given to a Year 2 boy by his teacher. She simply said, 'I'm so sorry', when a visitor had interrupted his conversation with her. A foundation governor stated that 'Respect and love jump out in school life'. This is certainly evident to visitors to the school too. Teaching of Christianity is inventive and creative. Encouragement and sensitive prompting, both verbally and through the positive marking system, contribute significantly to the good and often outstanding progress through all year groups. RE thereby makes an invaluable contribution to the Christian character of the school. The experienced co-ordinator is excited about the subject and thus inspires children and staff alike. The potential for further developments and improvements is clear. The school is aware that the link between the Christian values and their source in Jesus' life and teaching is not yet clear to everyone.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is a vital part of school life. The variety in content, groupings and leadership styles supports an engaging mix of worship experiences. Clear links to the Bible, including Jesus and his teachings, are made in a context of joy and respect. Christian values, Bible stories and readings, puppetry, humour and excellent singing all contribute to these occasions, enriching the lives of everyone present. Worship themes often lead to further exploration in the strong Christian teaching in RE. A Year 6 boy said that the main message from the Bible story about Daniel was, 'If you've got something you believe in, don't let go of it!' Personal spiritual development is enhanced further through a strong focus on reflection and prayer. The interactive prayer display and resource in the entrance hall encourages children to write their own prayers. Many of these are used in whole school worship. Spontaneous prayer is occasionally evident, and a Year 6 girl speaking eloquently about her silent prayers said, 'I feel better when I mouth my prayer'. Not all children are aware that prayer is understood to be a conversation with God. The children have a good understanding about God as Father and creator and about Jesus as Son of God and Saviour. They are far less certain about the role of the Holy Spirit, although one Year 5 girl said that 'The Holy Spirit will guide you and be inside you'. The whole school community is involved with the planning and leading of worship, with the vicar playing a key role in explaining and demonstrating Anglican traditions and sacraments. He leads worship in school and in church, and is keen to deepen the children's understanding of the Christian faith. The school is aware that the evaluation of worship in order to make improvements is under-developed. The local Methodist church hosts a regular Easter workshop for two-year groups, and the children are aware that Christianity is a worldwide faith with a wide variety of expression.

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

The headteacher leads with Christian conviction and by example. Her staff and governors follow that lead in showering the children with love and care so as to bring out their best qualities. Success has been achieved through exemplary teamwork. This includes excellent support for the work being done by the co-ordinators of RE and worship. The school's vision, as stated in their prospectus, is 'to apply Christian values to everything we do in school', and all staff work hard to implement them throughout school life. The vicar commented that everyone is 'living out the Christian values' to guide, support and inspire the children. These values make a strong impact on the whole school curriculum and governor monitoring and evaluation ensures that it is balanced and

develops the whole child. The Christian character of the school shines through, and is experienced by all who are part of or visitors to this warm and welcoming community. Every family is aware that the openly Christian love and care is always available, especially at times of need. The impact of the Christian vision of the school is secured through diligent and strategic planning. The senior leadership team and the governors regularly undertake thorough evaluation of this planning and policymaking. This evaluative work is supportive and yet challenging when appropriate. The areas for development from the previous report have been tackled well. The provision of RE and worship meets statutory requirements. Preparation for future leadership in church schools is built on excellent teamwork, delegation and high quality in-service training. Partnerships with the local church, the wider community including two local church primary schools, and the parents are strong and mutually supportive. The foundation governors and the school are constantly seeking ways to strengthen these links further, with support from other Christian denominations when appropriate. The school raises money for Christian charities, acknowledging that this is a practical example of compassion for those in need. The parents are very appreciative of the Christian care shown. They know that, for the staff, the wellbeing of every child and every family is paramount. Many parents are involved in the dedicated 'Friends' of the school group giving crucial financial and practical help, notably with the 'forest school' development, Bugs Wood. This is a key resource in the support for and development of the more vulnerable children in school. Parents are very proud of their school, and comments included, 'It's a real comfort to have (our daughter) here' and 'They are taught the right values, so that's great!'

SIAMS report October 2016, Little Sutton CofE Primary School, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH66 4PP