

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

<b>Garstang St Thomas Church of England Primary School</b>			
<b>Address</b>	Kepple Lane, Preston, PR3 1PB		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	04 July 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	VA primary
<b>Diocese</b>	Blackburn	<b>URN</b>	119528

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
<b>Additional Judgements</b>		
<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

### School context

Garstang St Thomas Church of England Primary School currently has 190 pupils on roll, slightly smaller than the average school, but the population is increasing. The school has very low levels of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in line with national averages. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed, who has established a leadership team to include a Pastoral leader.

### The school's Christian vision

Our vision is to be an excellent Church of England School: we are guided by God, we love each other, we love learning, we wonder why, we joyfully serve, we lead, we persevere, all rooted in the Bible and lived out daily in school, by our children and staff.

### Key findings

- The strong Christian vision motivates school leaders and holistically infuses the strategic direction of the school.
- The school community lives out its Christian vision by being effectively inclusive, whereby all are treated with dignity and respect.
- The vision motivates a curriculum, supported by inspiring enrichment opportunities, which enables all pupils to flourish.
- The exemplary synergy between school and the local church creates profound collective worship opportunities enabling all to find space for spiritual growth.
- Pupils are stimulated by religious education (RE) to think critically and reflectively, exploring major life events in a safe place.

### Areas for development

- To develop mutually beneficial global partnership links so that pupils develop a greater awareness of global issues.
- To more extensively and publicly promote the school's distinctive Christian vision, so that the Christian narrative is more widely understood.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

### Inspection findings

Garstang St Thomas CE Primary School is led by an enthusiastic and driven headteacher with a heart for pastoral care. His shared vision to demonstrate Christian distinctiveness through action in all school life is articulated well by all. Governors and staff are aspirational in wanting to 'to make it work', as one governor put it. They all make bold decisions to implement the vision. The appointment of a pastoral lead on the leadership team, together with strategic staff deployment, has been effective in ensuring rapid and sustained action when needed. By building significant bridges with parents and working in partnerships with other professionals, barriers to learning are minimised and pupils flourish. This is particularly evident in the welcome and individualised support for the many new starters to the school community. Attendance is excellent, with pupils clearly extremely keen to be part of this optimistic community. The highly respected leader of special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) has ensured accurate identification and effective provision for needs to be addressed. Assessment systems are rigorous and enable leaders to make rapid strategic responses regarding any underperformance of groups, including the more able. Consequently, all pupils thrive within the integrated curriculum.

The school is highly inclusive, with a dedicated emphasis on pastoral care and nurture of the whole child. The Christian vision drives the school's ethos which is 'to respect everyone for who they are and not what they have'. Pupils and adults live out the Christian narrative to 'Respect everyone, and love your brothers and sisters' (Peter 2:17). Pupils are highly respectful of all members of the community. Parents feel their children are valued. One stated that 'pupils are valued for their differences and nurtured to become the best that they can be'. Another explained that 'every life matters to God and each part of your life is special to God'. The behaviour of pupils is excellent, built on a firm foundation of support. Staff understand behaviour as a form of communication. A clear behaviour policy, which embraces a restorative approach, enables pupils to keep their dignity and have a speedy fresh start. There is extensive support for newly qualified staff ensuring confidence, quality and coherence throughout school. All staff feel valued and respected and leaders display sensitivity to staff pastoral needs. Practical adjustments are made to safeguard staff mental health and well-being. There is a clear structured journey planned for school improvement ensuring manageable, successful as well as aspirational outcomes. Staff describe a dynamic, evolving culture as they contribute and their voices are heard. Diocesan staff training has impacted directly on development of leadership skills and subsequent support for other Church schools.

Leaders have a strong vision to develop pupils' spirituality exploring the world as part of God's creation. Opportunities to 'wonder why' are grasped throughout the curriculum. The ambitious enrichment programme has been created to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils from diverse social backgrounds. The extremely moving visit to the French war cemeteries by older pupils was spiritually inspirational. By leading a moving service at the gravesides, pupils identified deeply with the feelings of others. As well as helping pupils explore ethical issues, it resulted in high quality expressive writing. Exceptional use of questioning throughout the curriculum assists pupils to achieve a greater depth of understanding. It also encourages pupils to reflect on Christian values throughout their learning. In Geography, pupils reflected on whether they had any responsibility for the planting of palm oil trees leading to exploitation of rain forests. One, having learnt an ore was harvested from palm oil for manufacturing mobile phones, advocated being less selfish. They decided not to have a phone and so help to save the orang-utan habitat. Thoughtful analysis of involvement in clubs leads to action to extend provision. This ensures out-of-school clubs include something appropriate for every child.

Collective worship, at the heart of school life, is treasured by adults and pupils. Children know a wide range of liturgical prayers and also make good use of classroom prayer focus areas. Opportunities for prayer thread through the curriculum. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for leading their class worship. There is a vibrant, mutually supportive collaboration with the local church and other denominations. 'Open the Book' led by church members, with a focus on drama, notably has significant impact. It strengthens and develops the understanding of the relevance of Jesus' teaching in today's world for both pupils and adults. Through evaluation of the collective worship, pupils reflect on the significant difference it makes in their lives. Parents, staff and governors have made many evaluative comments which have helped restructure worship. Through a variety of worship styles, worship is meaningful and inclusive to both adults and pupils. Recommendations from the previous SIAMS have clearly been embedded.

The innovative 'Year of Service' has focussed the school's vision of serving others, underpinned by Mark 10:45 'For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.' Parents have appreciated working closely with school by identifying acts of service. One of them commented that through sharing Christian values 'children don't do things to get an award, they just know what is the right thing to do'. At lunchtimes the older pupils have embraced the opportunity to show leadership through serving at tables and rewarding other pupils who display Christian values. This inspires pupils to act thoughtfully and kindly towards each other. The teaching of RE is excellent. The spiritual and moral maturity of the pupils is stimulated through provision of a safe space where pupils are encouraged to explore deep questions without inhibition. Children have a good understanding of world faiths supported by visits to their places of worship. Through overseas links and financial support of a young Ghanaian, pupils have a good understanding of Christianity as a living world faith.

Wider community involvement is inspired by the school's Christian vision to love as Jesus loved. A consequence is that pupils challenge exploitation of the natural world. The impact of pupils' voice on reducing use of plastic has compelled school leaders to reflect on their selection of school resources. New work benches were therefore made from sustainable wood, rather than plastics. Pupils are not afraid to express persuasive opinions, knowing they will be considered respectfully. Additionally, pupils advocate support for a wide range of social projects, both financially and through actions. 'Dancing with Dementia' gave pupils a rich understanding of age diversity and the value in treating others with dignity and respect. Pupils explained that RE lessons helped them understand what it is 'to be fully human, like Jesus was'.



**The effectiveness of RE is Excellent**

The subject leader has established excellent assessment systems, ensuring high standards. Progress throughout all year groups is excellent with a significant proportion of all pupils making above average progress. Teachers feel more knowledgeable and empowered through excellent training from the subject leader. Through use of extensive resources and asking 'big questions', pupils develop profound understanding of biblical concepts and major life events. One Year 2 pupil reflected on Pentecost 'Jesus went away but God was still here because the Holy Spirit came so we wouldn't be on our own.' Year 5 pupils reflected deeply on death, exploring whether it was an end or a beginning, through a rich diversity of literature, song, pictures and the memorial garden.

Headteacher	James Blakely
Inspector's name and number	Jan Potter 939