

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Leyland Methodist Junior School

Canberra Road Leyland Lancashire PR253ET	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Methodist District	Lancashire
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Lancashire
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date of inspection	15 June 2017
Date of last inspection	12 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 119400
Headteacher	Kathryn Melling
Inspector's name and number	Ian Rimmer 801

School context

Leyland Methodist Junior School is a two form entry junior school. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2011. Having been placed in special measures by Ofsted in April 2012, a new leadership team was put in place and considerable changes were made to the teaching staff and governing body. Ofsted judged the school as good in January 2016. The majority of pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Leyland Junior School as a Methodist school are outstanding

- The dynamic Christian leadership of the headteacher relentlessly drives forward school improvement.
- The school's distinctively Christian character underpins all pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development – particularly by showing strong Christian love to those with additional needs.
- The partnership between school leadership, including governors, local Methodist church and circuit brings sustained benefits to both school and church.
- Collective worship is inspirational and offers many opportunities for personal prayer and reflection so that the whole school community can apply the themes and teaching to their own lives.
- Pupils enjoy and are challenged by religious education so that this serves a major role in strengthening the Christian character of the school.

Areas to improve

- Leaders should continue to carry out effective and insightful self-evaluation so that the school continues to serve as an outstanding distinctively Methodist church school
- The school should develop closer links with other Methodist schools in the local community to strengthen relationships for the mutual benefit of all.

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

Distinctively Christian values lie at the heart of this school's ethos and vision statement. Furthermore, they are fully embedded in the school community. This is primarily because all members of the school community fully understand and consistently talk about these throughout daily life from a Christian perspective. School leaders including governors strategically and routinely evaluate, challenge and support the impact of Christian values so that they maintain a very high profile. There are many real-life examples of how living out the school's Christian character directly benefits everyone in school and strongly supports pupils' SMSC development.

The vision behind and impact of the Beehive classroom demonstrate the school's commitment to sharing Christian love and truly valuing all pupils as unique. Pupils are thankful that their school is welcoming, where people are compassionate towards each other and where actions speak louder than words. They say that learning is fun and everyone is encouraged to persevere in their learning to achieve the best they can. A Year 5 pupil explains respect in terms of an everlasting circle which strengthens relationships and behaviour for learning. Anti-bullying ambassadors help other pupils in making informed choices at playtimes. Parents agree about their children becoming more responsible for their behaviour and developing more positive attitudes to learning. One parent proudly says, 'This school has taught my child how to love again.' They add, 'This school is about valuing the whole child to make them ready for high school and later life.' As a consequence, standards are improving. In 2016, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected standard in writing was above national average though the percentage attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined was just below national average.

Attendance is above national average and exclusions well-below national average.

Pupils embrace many opportunities to write and share their own prayers both in class reflection areas and in worship. They see prayer as a vital part of their spiritual journey. One prayer reads, 'Help us to forgive others. We all make mistakes but they help us to forgive.' Workshops run by the Methodist schools worker helped a pupil understand prayer as 'talking to God so that you keep a connection with Him and get thoughts off your chest even if you are not ready to tell others.'

In a Year 6 religious education (RE) lesson, pupils openly discuss where faith and fear may respectively lie in a local tragic event. Drawing upon their knowledge of inspirational people who they believe have been led by the Holy Spirit, they share examples of how hope and unity can be spread in the midst of the darkness. In the context of this and other recent tragic events, pupils are fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith. The school council actively promotes and secures support across the school for local charities and the Bethany Family Project in Tanzania. Consequently, they show a deep understanding and respect for diversity both within the church and wider faith communities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is fully inclusive, multi-sensory and creatively engages the whole school community in personal reflection. Christian symbols are displayed prominently on a special table at the front of the hall to serve as a focal point. Incorporating sign-language into worship songs enhances the lyrics. Age-appropriate images help pupils visualise Bible stories so that they enthusiastically contribute to discussions. Strong links are forged between worship, RE and Christian values so that worship is integral to developing a deeper and living understanding of Jesus Christ across the whole school. Pupils notice that staff always refer to the Christian values in terms of daily application. Before sharing the Lord's Prayer, individuals are challenged to consider where responsibility lies in the text of the prayer. This reminds everyone of their responsibility to forgive others and how God is responsible for helping us in so many ways.

Worship relates John Wesley's rule to everyday life so that all reflect and aspire to take more responsibility to always do the best they can. They respect the learning opportunities provided for all their classmates by ensuring that they listen attentively so that others can do the same. As a result, pupils also reflect about how people have been responding out of love to recent tragic events in our country. In a personal prayer about perseverance, one pupil writes, 'Lord, please help us to never give up and always keep going no matter what.'

Pupils speak confidently about the Trinity as God our Father in heavenly form watching over us, Jesus as God in mortal form on earth and God the Holy Spirit always being with us. The wide range of art and written work displayed in the hall demonstrates an impressive degree of understanding of the Trinity across the entire school. A number of leaders, including teachers with their respective classes, Methodist minister and Methodist schools worker, plan and lead acts of worship in different settings so that learners benefit from a range of rich experiences. Learners confidently embrace opportunities to lead worship on each half-term's Christian value in church and parents value this considerably. Established practices for monitoring and evaluation are purposeful and are efficient so that written evaluations convincingly evidence clear impact of worship on individuals across the school community. For example, following collective worship about trust, staff comment about the importance of choosing to be truthful in whatever they say or do. Pupils say that worship has significantly improved since they started school.

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

The headteacher clearly and confidently articulates a strong vision for the school that is built upon distinctively Christian values. She refers directly to the parable of the talents, stating that the school exists simply to do all it can to serve all the children in whatever way it can. This is openly exemplified in the headteacher's determination to establish the Beehive classroom to support pupils with additional needs. Leadership at all levels consistently models the Christian values so that all members of the school flourish and achieve their full potential within the context of a Christian community. Leaders speak at length about how the explicit Christian values have a clear impact on the whole school community. This includes how pupils have developed more resilience as learners.

The governors' determination to improve learners' outcomes and their focus on explicit Christian values have led to standards improving over recent years. Governors have benefited from drawing upon expertise available to provide insight and practical support on church school self-evaluation. This now takes the form of focused and supportive learning walks, scrutiny of pupils' work in RE and observations of collective worship so that it leads convincingly to effective strategies for improvement. Self-evaluation involves all groups of the school community. Having observed worship, a governor writes, 'Reflection and consideration of pupils' own responses to similar situations was skilfully woven throughout.' Distinctively Christian reflection areas have grown into more prominent and interactive focal points in classrooms. Increasing use is being made of the outdoor space available and this journey is well-documented in the school's own self-review.

The minister is actively involved with school leaders including governors in evaluating the impact of the school as a church school. He routinely supports the worship co-ordinator and teaching staff with the planning of both whole-school and class-led collective worship as well as regularly leading worship himself. As a result, staff and pupils are now far more confident in planning and leading their own worship. The Methodist schools worker further enhances the school's Christian leadership capacity by writing material and leading distinctively Christian learning across the school through programmes such as The Life Path of John Wesley and Barriers to Prayer. The Methodist church and circuit support partnerships with school leadership to develop closer links between other local schools. This results in co-ordinated approaches to worship, spiritual development and distinctively Methodist knowledge and understanding.

A Year 4 girl speaks enthusiastically about the mother of a classmate coming into school to share her experiences as a Muslim and how this helps her to understand other faith communities better.

The school prioritises, develops and effectively applies essential Christian leadership qualities in the assistant headteachers and the wider governing body for the benefit of all groups across the school. One assistant headteacher has attended the Christian Leadership course. This shows a clear commitment to responding to current and future needs in church school education.

SIAMS report June 2017 Leyland Methodist Junior School, Leyland, Lancashire, PR253ET