

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Rainford Church of England Primary School

Cross Pit Lane, Rainford, St Helens, Merseyside, WA11 8AJ

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Liverpool

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

St Helens

Date of inspection

14 September 2017

Date of last inspection

May 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

VCI04790

Headteacher

Anya Richardson

Inspector's name and number

Lisa Horobin 900

School context

Rainford Church of England Primary School currently has 280 children on roll. The school population is largely drawn from the immediate local area and the majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium is significantly below the national average. The number of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND) is also less than average. The school oversees a parent and toddler group and manages an out of school care scheme. Raindrops Preschool opened in September 2014. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, chair of governors and incumbent have all been appointed since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rainford as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The passionate and inspirational Christian leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by dedicated staff and governors, motivates all aspects of school improvement. As a result the school's bold mission statement is lived out in every aspect of school life.
- The exemplary commitment and co-operation of the local incumbent and school leaders result in a dynamic, vibrant relationship between the church and the school.
- Christian values are deeply embedded and clearly articulated by all members of the school community. This is evident in relationships, the environment, worship, pupils' behaviour and in the curriculum.
- The strong appreciation of all stakeholders that their school is a community working together, enables every person to flourish and become the person God has created them to be.

Areas to improve

- Continue to develop the role and responsibility of the ethos group so that pupils become more confident to lead worship and prayer with increasing independence and creativity.
- Extend the religious education (RE) curriculum in order to develop further pupils' knowledge and understanding of faiths other than Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

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

The authentic Christian character of Rainford Church of England Primary School is evident from the moment you enter the school and their website unashamedly proclaims that everyone is welcome to their Christian school. Pupils are proud of their school, they enthusiastically exclaim that 'our school is amazing'. In response to questions they said that they are very happy to come to school and this is reflected in the above average attendance figures. The standard of behaviour is high and pupils make excellent academic progress. The school is committed to meeting the needs of the whole child. A pupil explained that the full-time learning mentor 'is here to help us. We don't have to worry about anything'. The Headteacher explains clearly that pupils must be given the 'building blocks' for life. Equipping pupils with all the tools they need to grow and flourish is the goal expressed in the school's aims. As a result Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) education is woven inextricably throughout all areas of the school curriculum and priority is given to ensuring pupils feel listened to, valued and loved.

The school has undergone many changes in all aspects of school life since the last inspection. These changes have been managed by a very dedicated Headteacher. The leadership of the school has recently been praised by Ofsted and recognised as confident and determined. Ofsted acknowledged the impact of the Christian ethos on relationships across the school community. Gospel values are deeply embedded in the curriculum, policies, environment and management of the school. The pupils, staff, governors and parents all confidently explain the characteristics of these Christian values and show understanding of what it means to put them into action. During the last academic year the stakeholders of the school carried out a review of the school's core values and a new set were chosen. This has reemphasised the importance of the Christian values and deepened pupil's understanding of how they make an impact in their lives. A pupil commented that 'you should follow the values and then you will make a difference in society'.

There is a very strong relationship between the school and the local parish church which impacts on the distinctive character of the school. The pupils and staff speak very highly of the vicar and her active involvement in all features of school life is a special quality of the school.

Pupils are excited and challenged by RE. An overwhelming 'yes' confirmed that they consider it to be one of the most important parts of the curriculum. They particularly enjoy finding out about the history behind the Bible stories. Pupils are fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural worldwide faith. They are very keen to develop further the link that has been made with a school in Tanzania and spoke with enthusiasm about the 'Easter around the world' project.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship has a prominent place in the life of the school. Reflection areas, opportunities to pray and biblical quotes of encouragement are found throughout the building and have a positive effect on behaviour and attitudes. An appropriate atmosphere is created for worship both in the hall and classrooms. All members of the school community have high expectations of content ensuring that it is meaningful and relevant. The school creatively celebrates with the local parish church the events of the church year. The Posada, Experiencing Easter and Family Fun Day projects show church and school are working together to ensure that pupils grow spiritually. Evaluation forms filled in by a variety of stakeholders support this and provide further insight into how worship influences the whole life of the school community. Pupils speak knowledgeably about the seasons, colours and festivals of the Christian calendar. They are familiar with Anglican traditions and liturgy. They have a good understanding of God as the Trinity and can explain the distinctive roles of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All members of staff, the vicar and a range of visiting speakers from the local community lead worship and this ensures that pupils encounter regularly a wide variety of worship experiences and role models. Worship is well planned and firmly rooted in Christian values and Biblical teaching. The pupils have a sound knowledge of the Bible and can confidently connect Bible stories with values in action.

Thorough monitoring and evaluation led to a review of the school's values and therefore new content has been added to the collective worship programme. The pupils played a key part in this process and there is a clear vision for developing the ethos group's role and responsibility in further embedding the new school values. The introduction of joy, justice and perseverance as key values inspired the creation of the new school prayer.

Pupils enjoy taking an active part in worship especially singing lively modern worship songs which they continue to sing at home. Class worship on Wednesdays gives pupils a regular opportunity to plan and lead collective worship. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about being trusted to create worship. One pupil in particular passionately expressed the importance of prayer in her life. 'We do everything with God and for God in our school.'

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

The leadership of the school confidently articulates their vision for the school which is framed by the words of the bold mission statement 'Learning and growing together, to achieve our best, in the love of God' and rooted in Gospel values. The vision directly impacts on the spiritual and practical day to day running of the school. The thorough process of self-evaluation involving all stakeholders gives the school leadership a clear direction of where they are and where to go next when making decisions about school improvement. Pupils are given opportunities to share their ideas and opinions and they are adamant that their voice is heard.

Governors are well informed, involved and supportive of school life. The recent introduction of a Christian Distinctiveness, Care and Support committee to the governing body structure is a sure sign that governors take seriously their responsibility to hold the school to account for its Christian distinctiveness. The governing body intentionally make decisions with the aim that 'the Christian foundation of the school becomes a foundation for life'. The school is proactive in ensuring new staff and governors attend training that will provide them with an understanding of the distinctive nature of their work in a church school.

The school follows the Liverpool Diocesan RE Syllabus. The committed and very effective RE coordinator ensures that the subject has a high profile in school impacting on the Christian distinctiveness of the curriculum.

Opportunities for studying faiths other than Christianity are provided, but the range and depth of this study is an area for improvement. Regular and efficient monitoring concludes that standards and knowledge are good.

Workbooks show that a wide variety of teaching strategies are used and pupils are actively involved in their lessons. Pupils are challenged to think, ask questions and apply their knowledge. An RE working wall is a prominent feature in every classroom.

The relationship with the local parish church is well established and has been recognised by the diocese through the presentation of the Church School Partnership Award. Members of the congregation are keen to be part of the prayer spaces projects such as 'Experience Easter'. The Raindrops nursery children join with the church toddler group each Wednesday for tots praise. Members of the school community talk about how welcoming the church is to both children and adults. The vicar regular visits school taking part in RE lessons as well as worship. Pupils light up when they talk about her, describing her as kind and considerate.

Parents talk about how happy their children are to come to school and how well the needs of individual children are addressed. This is evident in the rich and varied additional curriculum experiences and environment provided for the pupils. Parents feel that the school gives their children 'a moral compass'. They emphasise the strong sense of community within school that gives pupils a feeling of belonging and desire to do their best in everything. A very effective parents association extends the ethos of the school into the wider community. The children have a strong sense of social justice and take an active part in raising money for charity and projects such as 'Operation Christmas Child'.

SIAMS report September 2017 Rainford (VC) Church of England Primary School, Cross Pit Lane, Rainford, St Helens, WA11 8AJ