

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

### Mobberley Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Knutsford, WA16 7RA

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Good**

**Diocese**

**Chester**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Cheshire East

Date of inspection

4 May 2017

Date of last inspection

12 July 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Controlled 111277

Headteacher

Carol Owen

Inspector's name and number

Ann Lock  
QA Assessor Allyson Taylor (768)

#### School context

Mobberley Church of England voluntary controlled primary is a smaller than average rural school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is well below the national average. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds. The number of pupils with special educational needs statements or who have an educational care plan is in line with the national average. There are no known children for whom English is an additional language. Mobberley is a very popular, oversubscribed village school.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mobberley School as a Church of England school are good

- Relationships at the school are very strong, deeply underpinned by its Christian character resulting in a safe, nurturing learning environment where all pupils thrive personally and academically.
- All members of the school community value collective worship, responding positively and participating with enthusiasm.
- Service to the local community and many local and national charities reflects the passionate community spirit of the school so that adults and children have a strong calling to take action in the service of others.
- Religious education (RE) is taught to a high standard and makes an important contribution to pupils' understanding of Christianity.
- An enthusiastic headteacher and committed governors live and breathe the Christian ethos.

#### Areas to improve

- Self-evaluation strategies need to be formalised by the governing body so that progress and accountability can be measured in the on-going development of the school's Christian character, both in RE and collective worship.
- Extend opportunities to facilitate pupils to independently plan, deliver and evaluate worship so that it becomes more inclusive.
- Christian distinctiveness needs to be made more explicit in the daily life of the school including policies, website and prospectus so all members of the community can confidently articulate links between Christian values and biblical teaching.

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

A strong, nurturing Christian ethos at Mobberley Church of England School results in great morale. The school vision 'open hearts, open minds, open doors', is engaging and highly motivational. It enables all pupils to flourish and achieve high personal and academic standards regardless of background or ability. School says on their welcome statement that they aim for 'children to enjoy their school life and feel safe and secure within the school family instilled with Christian values.' This is true, as school leaders clearly model Christian values. Adults say they aspire 'to actively live out faith' through love and respect for one another. The headteacher and the leadership team enthusiastically exemplify Christian qualities of service and commitment. This results in an encouraging, warm, learning environment with harmonious interpersonal relationships. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated, attendance is high and behaviour is excellent. Caring Christian attitudes are evident through the 'buddy system' which is based on Jesus' example of caring and forgiving one another. Pupils say that 'Jesus showed all the values' but they were not able to articulate how their school values or mission statement were biblically based. Christian values are not sufficiently seen in key areas such as the school website, prospectus and policy documentation.

However, living out Christian values has resulted in Year 6 actively engaging in the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders' Programme. Pupils readily say how this course is helping them to develop team and leadership skills in a safe Christian context. They value the oneness of belonging to a bigger Christian community nationally. Through this programme, pupils' understanding of British values of democracy and freedom are enhanced. Opportunities are frequently provided for pupils to participate in debates and discussions. They feel safe expressing their opinions confidently within a caring, Christian environment.

Vulnerable pupils are exceptionally well cared for, through the fervent delivery of a 'mindfulness' programme which aims to promote good mental health. The school has rigorous tracking systems in place to ensure all pupils make expected progress. Consequently, each pupil fulfils their individual potential as a unique child of God.

Mobberley school facilitates a broad range of rich and diverse activities to enable all learners to develop a greater understanding and respect for different faiths and cultures. This is very effective in extending pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The impact of this has also been positive on parents who have enjoyed learning about other religions by attending follow up faith presentations delivered by pupils. One parent said that it has made a real difference to her daughter's understanding of another faith. Pupils convey a real sense of enjoyment and excitement from the realisation that they are global citizens in a diverse world. They talk keenly about the importance of their links with St Wilfrid's and a Christian community in Ghana. This partnership actively enhances their understanding of Christianity as a world faith.

RE lessons provide regular opportunities for pupils to explore the Christian character of the school. Challenging questions are posed which enable pupils to think deeply about religion. The impact of drama in RE is very effective and enables children in Reception and Key Stage 1 to learn about stories from the Bible.

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

All members of the school community express the value and importance of Christian collective worship in the daily rhythm of school life. Pupils state that it makes them feel calm and helps them to get ready to learn, as well as influencing positive attitudes to one another. Pupils enjoy worship and respond with very enthusiastic singing and thoughtful reflections. Adults say that worship is a time to ponder and appreciate God's love. Prayer is central to the life of the school. Christian identity is enhanced through everyone collectively reciting the Lord's Prayer. Class prayers at the beginning, middle and end of every day also helps to develop learners' spirituality. Pupils sometimes write their own prayers, indicating a developing understanding of the personal value of individual worship.

Evaluations of worship by both pupils and parents are taken into consideration when planning future worship.

The Bible is given a central focus during collective worship. Opportunities for reflection enable pupils to apply Christian principles to their own daily lives. Pupils talk about Bible stories but do not generally reflect on the centrality of Jesus in worship. Not all members of the school community could articulate the impact of worship on their own spirituality or connect biblical material to the school's core values.

Due to the close relationship with St Wilfrid's there are extensive opportunities to gather collectively in the parish church. Revd Blay says that 'this normalises faith and worship for pupils so that they see it as part of their everyday life'. This is reinforced through celebration of Christian festivals at church such as Harvest and Christmas. Revd Ian Blay and the local Methodist minister, Revd Scott, are both regularly involved in the delivery of worship in school. This provides a rich and varied experience of different Christian traditions. Revd Blay has been helping pupils develop an understanding of the Holy Trinity which the children could talk about clearly. Parents comment favourably on how their children share prayers and stories at home which they say is helping to develop spiritual awareness.

The pupil ethos committee are keen to become more involved with independent planning and delivery of worship. Pupils genuinely enjoy taking part in adult led worship so are ready to take more responsibility in the future. Worship results in the development of a caring and selfless attitude towards others, not just in school, but well beyond the community of Mobberley. The direct impact of worship results in a caring ethos which inspires pupils to get involved with supporting good causes by raising money for national and local charities. One school project which has benefitted Mobberley village is the new phone box book exchange. The pupils are very proud of their endeavours in providing an upgraded reading facility for their community.

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

The headteacher and deputy headteacher enthusiastically promote a Christian vision of openness, tolerance and respect. This is summed up in their new statement of purpose, 'open hearts, open minds, open doors'. The leadership team skilfully guided the whole school community through an inclusive process to agree this new vision. This culminated in engaging pupils in purposeful discussions and joint presentations. The ethos statement unifies the school community and gives everyone a sense of purpose. The statement of purpose is lived and breathed enthusiastically by an inspiring headteacher and committed governors. Lack of understanding of explicit biblical roots for the ethos statement by pupils prevents the grade from being higher. However, the statement of purpose does inspire leaders to provide a broad range of spiritual, moral, cultural and social experiences. Examples of this are the annual Pilgrim's trip to Chester Cathedral and participation in local music events such as with the Halle orchestra. As a direct result, learners interact with other pupils from different backgrounds, cultures and faiths. The Christian character is a highly motivating influence which underpins relationships, personal wellbeing and high academic achievement as well as tolerance and respect for all.

Leaders are confident that the impact of Christian values motivates staff and pupils to strive for aspirational targets. School leaders know individual pupils exceptionally well through detailed achievement data. They support each pupil to achieve his or her potential. Tailored interventions are rapidly implemented if a child requires additional support, for example, though the personalised provision of the 'mindfulness' programme. Church school self-evaluation is not sufficiently reflective to ensure school leaders know the impact of their actions and how progress is made in RE and collective worship. School governors have not developed formalised systems to ensure that the Christian character of the school and collective worship are evaluated strategically. School documentation has limited reference to explicit Christian values.

The leadership of RE and collective worship are central to the life of the school inspired by the new vision. Teaching staff have a personal performance management target to develop Christian vision and values at the heart of the school. They systematically plan for Christian values to be the focal point of school worship every half term. Pupils could readily recall 'service' as their current value and how it has helped Year 6 in working through their roles in the Archbishop's Young Leaders' Award. One pupil shared that when she felt insecure she remembered the value 'courage' and this 'helped her to come out of her shell'.

School leaders actively encourage the professional development of staff through studying for postgraduate qualifications. This is having a direct impact on standards across the school, for example phonics, where results are high. The headteacher and governors identify future church school leaders and support them in developing their expertise. This is seen by the way in which the RE leader has brought the whole school community together to implement a fresh vision.

Leaders ensure that arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Areas for development from the last inspection in 2012 have been fully met. The school's approach to improving learning about other religions is impressive. This is achieved through special faith days and visits to different places of worship. This culminates in class presentations to the whole school. Pupils and parents have been deeply affected by these experiences living out Christian values of tolerance and respect. Links with the parish, diocese and outside agencies are a core strength of the school. Mobberley Church of England school is outward looking and keen to forge external relationships to develop their understanding that they are all global citizens. Embracing the 'Go Global' project this year has further extended pupil appreciation of multi-cultural communities. Pupils are especially excited about their links with a Ghanaian Christian community through St Wilfrid's Church, thereby developing an appreciation of Christianity as a world faith.