

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

### Montreal Church of England Primary School

Ennerdale Road, Cleator Moor, Cumbria. CA25 5LW

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Carlisle</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Local authority	Cumbria
Date of inspection	21 June 2018
Date of last inspection	2 October 2014
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 132170
Headteacher	Lindsay Burnett
Inspector's name and number	Carol Berry 324

#### School context

Montreal is a smaller than average primary school of 153 pupils situated in West Cumbria, in a community with higher than usual levels of deprivation. It has more pupils than usual with special educational needs and disabilities. The number of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (42%) is above average. About 33% of disadvantaged pupils also have special educational needs. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The headteacher served as acting head from September 2016 and was appointed to the permanent post in March 2017. There have been significant changes to staffing and leadership in recent years. The local church has been without clergy since September 2016.

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

- The Christian vision, 'Caring, Loving and Learning Together', informs all aspects of school life. It makes a significant impact on leadership decisions and the school's commitment to caring for vulnerable pupils and their families.
- Christian values make a profound impact on pupils. Pupils apply Christian values as they reflect on their relationships and behaviour, both at school and at home.
- Excellent Christian leadership from the headteacher and assistant headteacher ensure that the school is a warm and welcoming inclusive community. Staff demonstrate exceptional commitment to meeting the needs of pupils who are facing difficulties.
- Pupils make a strong contribution to the leadership of collective worship. They regularly lead worship and their thoughtful evaluation contributes effectively to planning.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that biblical teaching underpinning the school's Christian vision and Christian values is shared with the whole school community. This is so that all members of the school are able to explain Christian teaching about the school's vision and values.
- Develop planning for collective worship to ensure that pupils engage with and revisit a balanced range of Bible stories, beliefs and festivals.
- Plan for spiritual development and teaching about Christian values in the wider curriculum, beyond collective worship and religious education (RE). This is to ensure that all children benefit from distinctively Christian spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC).

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

The Christian vision, 'Caring, Loving and Learning Together', results in a warm and welcoming community. Christian values are lived out through the school's determination to love and support each valued individual. Many pupils face significant challenges and the school's determination to meet their needs is transformative for both them and their families. Staff have gone out of their way to support pupils who have significant behaviour problems or have experienced personal trauma, including violence or bereavement. Their love and care is much appreciated by families and consequently the school has strong relationships with parents. They say, 'It is a brilliant school!' and 'My children love coming to school!' A parent whose child has a disability commented on the way Christian values are evident in the care provided for her son. Christian values contribute to a secure learning environment where behaviour is good and progress is improving. Most children make good progress from their starting points. Raising aspirations is a high priority for the school and the recent 'Aspirations Week' inspired children to think about a variety of exciting future careers.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of the school's values. They gain understanding of these through the vibrant displays around the school, the 'Values VIP' awards and the chance to nominate other pupils through the 'Catch Me Being Kind' box. Each value is re-visited in worship several times each year and the value of the week is shared with parents. As a result, parents say the children talk about and apply these values at home and when playing with their peers. Some children have a good understanding of biblical teaching about Christian values. They link love to the love of Jesus shown in dying on the cross, forgiveness to the story of the Unforgiving Servant and courage to the story of David and Goliath. However, some children are not able to link Bible stories to values. Some opportunities for sharing links between values and Christian teaching are missed. Biblical teaching linked to Christian values is not shared regularly in communications with parents or through displays. Staff often discuss values with pupils when thinking about behaviour or as part of learning. They sometimes grasp opportunities for awe and wonder, for example, during forest school lessons. However, they do not always plan for teaching about Christian values or spiritual development in subjects beyond collective worship and RE. Consequently, distinctively Christian SMSC is not secured routinely as part of the topic based curriculum.

The new 'Understanding Christianity' course is effectively supporting the development of RE. It is making a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of important Christian beliefs. Pupils are gaining a coherent understanding of stories in the Bible through the production of some wonderful artwork. This has been used to make 'the Big Frieze', telling the story of salvation as revealed in the Bible. RE effectively supports pupils' understanding of Christian values. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils' emotions were engaged as they explored the concept of justice through the story of 'The Little Red Hen' and some unfair gifts of sweets. Children gain a sound understanding of different faiths and have a profound respect for people of different faiths and cultures. These positive attitudes are supported by recent work exploring the way Christmas is celebrated in different countries. A Year 5 boy said, 'It is important to accept people. It doesn't matter what colour we are or what country we come from. We are all friends.'

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

Collective worship is important to the school. It is a significant way in which the welcoming and loving ethos is celebrated and secured. Pupils enjoy worship and recognise its relevance to their own lives. They sing exuberantly, participate enthusiastically and take time for quiet reflection at the end of each act of worship. They particularly enjoy the weekly worship led by children. Children often write prayers for use in worship, sometimes using prayer to share deep hurt or concern. As a result they understand some different types of prayer and talk confidently about why prayer is important to Christians.

Worship supports children's understanding of diversity within Christianity. A variety of visitors from different churches lead worship. Songs and prayers from the world church help pupils understand the global nature of Christianity. The recent 'Diversity Day' included an Anglican priest and Baptist minister sharing the way in which they worship and children learnt about approaches to baptism. The strong partnership with the local church enriches worship. School and church are committed to maintaining this, although there is at present no local vicar in post and a much-loved member of the congregation regularly contributes to worship. Use is made of church buildings for special services to celebrate Harvest, Christmas and Easter and these services are enjoyed by parents.

Leadership of worship is good. Support from the worship co-ordinator effectively supports increased staff involvement in leading worship. Evaluation procedures include a range of stakeholders, including governors and children. Planning for collective worship ensures that children revisit the school's six core values throughout the year and so gain an excellent understanding of how they relate to their lives. However, there is no formal planning

for the inclusion of Bible stories, beliefs or festivals in worship. These are always incorporated by the leaders of worship, but planning does not ensure that children revisit Bible stories and beliefs in order to recall and understand them more fully. Not all important beliefs and festivals are covered. Consequently, although children are confident in applying Christian values to their own lives, not all children relate values to Bible stories. They have not thought about some important beliefs about God, for example, beliefs about the Holy Spirit.

Pupils' involvement in the leadership of collective worship is excellent. Groups from different classes lead worship once each week. They plan with the support of a planning sheet provided by the diocese. This helps pupils to understand the structure and purpose of Christian worship. They say that planning worship has helped them to understand Christian values more deeply. For example, pupils led worship on the theme of justice, exploring the concept through scenarios they had created based on the World Cup. They thought about a Bible passage from Hosea, organised a quiz and wrote prayers. Pupils responded with excitement and enthusiasm. Pupils are supported in reflecting deeply on worship through their involvement in its evaluation. Pupils from a different class are involved in evaluation each week, using a helpful evaluation sheet which links back to the structure of worship. This feedback is used to inform future planning.

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

Caring Christian leadership from the headteacher and assistant headteacher ensure that the school's vision is lived out in all aspects of its work. They are supported by a strong staff team who are dedicated to meeting the needs of the children in their care, to enable them to flourish in personal and academic terms. The vision is well-understood by all members of the school community. This includes children who are often asked to reflect before going home on how they have 'cared, loved and learned' throughout the day. The way the vision is implemented results in the school being a beacon of the love of Christ in the community. Care for the whole family is a key part of the vision and the school has often supported families rather than just the child attending school. The vision informs all decision-making. This includes a compassionate approach to managing attendance, a caring and positive approach to behaviour management and the decision to invest in a full-time learning mentor to support vulnerable pupils. However, explicit biblical teaching about the vision is not shared with the wider school community and not all members of the community are able to articulate the biblical roots of the vision.

The strong partnership with the church enriches worship. A member of the congregation visits regularly to contribute to worship and RE. His story-telling gifts are greatly appreciated by staff and pupils. Others support reading and serve as governors. There is a strong partnership with the diocese. Year 6 children were enthusiastic about the cathedral service for leavers and the school is appreciative of the advisory support provided by the diocese. However, there are at present no global partnerships to enrich the children's understanding of their place in the global community.

The strong leadership of the headteacher is providing stability for the school following a turbulent time in recent years. This included a number of changes of leadership prior to the appointment of the current headteacher. The assistant headteacher provided effective support during the headteacher's recent maternity leave. She has embedded key developments in the leadership of collective worship and RE. These developments have been well-supported by staff training. Staff say the Understanding Christianity course has challenged them personally to think deeply, as well as supporting their practice in the classroom. The school is committed to developing Christian leaders and is funding Christian leadership training for both senior and middle leaders. Collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. Governance is effective. Foundation governors have received diocesan training and have a sound understanding of their role. They are fully involved in the self-evaluation of the school as a church school. They monitor through a range of visits and activities. As a result they know the school well and provide helpful support. The response made to the areas for development from the last SIAMS inspection report have made a good contribution to school improvement. Following a challenging period the school is excited about moving forward, demonstrating the love of God through 'Caring, Loving and Learning Together'.

SIAMS report June 2018 Montreal Church of England Primary School Cleator Moor Cumbria CA25 5LW