



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Albion Street  
Chadderton  
Oldham  
OL9 9HT

**Previous inspection grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Manchester**

Local authority: Oldham

Date of inspection: 8 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 4 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 105708

Headteacher: Ian Walsh

Inspector's name and number: Frank Driessen (675)

#### School context

St Luke's CE Primary School is in a predominantly challenging socio-economic area. The proportion of children from ethnic minority backgrounds who have English as an additional language is above the national average, as are the pupils who require special educational needs support. The proportion of children who are disadvantaged and receiving pupil premium is twice the national average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Luke's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong Christian leadership and vision of both the head teacher and deputy head with the support of the rector and a talented and committed school staff has ensured that distinctively Christian values are deeply embedded in the life and actions of the school
- Because of its distinctive, open, welcoming and affirming ethos as a Christian family the school has a clear awareness of its role at the heart of the parish and community
- There is outstanding care and support for both children and families who are placed in the centre of this very welcoming and truly inclusive community and nurtured as being precious and special in the eyes of God

#### Areas to improve

- Involve the children in the planning, development and evaluation of themes for collective worship, eventually incorporating them as worship leaders in its subsequent delivery to boost their confidence and spiritual growth

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

A huge sense of community and a love of children who are unique in the eyes of God are at the heart of this compassionate and inclusive Christian family. The teaching of Christian values through well-taught RE and excellent collective worship underpins the life of the school and makes a very significant contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development (SMSC). The aspirational drive to raise achievement has led to an understanding that everyone can succeed and the learning environment reinforces this message. A display at the front of the hall challenges children daily to think of 'What have you done to make you feel proud?' Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and say, 'The staff have such compassion and care for our children'. These Christian values underpin the highly effective support mechanisms established by the deputy head and family liaison manager that ensure barriers for learning are minimised for all children. Vulnerable children and those having special needs therefore make excellent progress and achieve well. This is a real strength of the school because it demonstrates the outworking of Christian love and compassion that is a bedrock to the school's commitment to 'find the best for all our families'. Pupils enjoy attending this caring, supportive and happy school. They immerse themselves in their learning and demonstrate high levels of empathy towards people of all faiths and no faiths and have developed a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Crosses, well-used prayer boxes and a superb prayer garden that is well-utilised by the newly-established 'Faith Friends' give a real focus to pupils' spiritual development. Bright multi-cultural RE displays in corridors, classrooms and the school hall enrich the vibrant Christian ethos. Pupils demonstrate very good aspects of citizenship through a very active school council, eco council, team captains and head boy and head girl positions. Because of this, pupil voice is excellent. Relationships are consequently outstanding at all levels and there is a strong emphasis on mutual support and teamwork. The Foundation Unit provides many excellent and on-going opportunities for spiritual development upon which successive year groups successfully build.

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

Worship at St Luke's is a time of great fellowship and sharing. It is held daily by a range of leaders and has a strong focus on enabling participants to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ and a Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils reflect, pray and experience the awe and wonder of the world around them during the worship time and this has a great spiritual impact upon them. Worship is structured round the integration of Values for Life and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning. This offers a rich mix of themes which is delivered in a way that is responsive to the needs of the pupils yet challenges them to see what the Bible story 'looks like in their lives'. 'We learn how to be a better person because of the Bible stories,' said one child. This reflects the aspirational nature of much of the worship and considerably promotes the pupils' SMSC. Acts of worship are imaginative and involve good levels of participation by all attending. Pupils, however, have little experience in its planning and leadership apart from class-led worship and in the achievement assembly. Worship is inclusive and valued by all pupils including those of other faiths or of none. Pupils demonstrate a reverence for the spiritual dimension of worship. Singing is exuberant and, along with the use of Makaton signing, adds a real spiritual element to the occasion. The Lord's Prayer is central to daily worship as is the popular School Prayer written by Year 6 pupils. Pupils see prayer as an important part of school life and enjoy writing their own. The Anglican framework of worship allows pupils to develop a very good understanding of Anglican worship not only because of the occasions they attend the church for services that include Easter and Christmas but also from the excellent involvement of the incumbent. Festivals from other faiths are celebrated regularly by the whole school and further promote excellent cultural cohesion and respect for diversity. Many parents and the extended family attend services, including class-led worship, with much enthusiasm. A popular after-school worship club enhances the opportunities for further enhancing the spiritual understanding of the pupils. Worship clearly occupies a place of central importance and securely underpins the school's distinctively Christian ethos.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Scrutiny of work and observation of lessons show that standards of teaching and learning are good and that standards of attainment of all learners are in line with national expectations with some exceeding them. Through assessment teachers are aware of the levels children are working at and this informs future planning for all abilities. The RE coordinator's effective monitoring and evaluation of RE gives a clear picture of the quality of provision as well as children's good progress in their learning. They are successfully encouraged to examine the difference religion makes in their lives with one parent commenting, 'These children have a different perspective on life. They really do love their neighbour'. Planning results in the exploration of ideas through art, music, drama, investigation, visits and visitors. This enables children to apply skills across other areas of the curriculum and leads to high levels of engagement. Because of this, lessons are 'fun and interesting' and pupils are enthusiastic about RE. Excellent class displays support the teaching of RE. The study of a range of comparative faiths deepens children's knowledge and understanding. Activities such as visits to a mosque and by visitors of different cultures who speak about their faith enrich the RE curriculum. These enhance and celebrate diversity and also strengthen community cohesion. Governors recognise the importance of RE in developing the distinctive school ethos and ensure requirements are met. Leadership of Religious Education is, therefore, given high priority and has a role equal in importance to other core subjects. It is included in the school development cycle and has its own budget. Lessons reinforce Christian values and beliefs and are an effective support for pupils' SMSC.

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

'Dynamic yet approachable, aspirational yet humble' is how the parents summed up the deep personal commitment and leadership of the well-respected head teacher, supported by an equally focused deputy. This is a very happy school that lives out its aspirational Christian message through giving its pupils life experiences and high expectations within a distinctive Christian community. All staff and parents share the school's vision with similar enthusiasm and commitment. Diversity is tremendously valued with disadvantaged and vulnerable groups exceptionally well supported through very effective relationships with other agencies. This is a real strength of the school because it demonstrates the outworking of Christian love and compassion that is a bedrock to the school's commitment to 'find the best for all our families'. Christian values are applied to the whole school context including the development of policies in which values are firmly embedded in practice. The successful leadership is further enhanced by the very close working relationship between the head teacher, incumbent and chair of governors. The incumbent is a pivotal member of the school. Pupils understand the importance of his role and say, 'Reverend Penny explains why our Bible stories are so important in our lives'. Many excellent links connect both parish and school and support its Christian vision very effectively. Governors have a highly active involvement and participation in the school's day-to-day life. They are very much involved in evaluating the distinctive Christian nature of the school through monitoring pupil's behaviour and conduct, the learning environment and reviewing the school's ethos and aims. Senior leaders monitor the positive impact of RE and collective worship and discuss this at governors' meetings. Because of this intense involvement, governors know the school extremely well and are able to plan effectively for its future development as a church school. Successful examples of this are the redevelopment of the school's mission statement involving the whole school and the establishment of the Prayer Garden. All previous areas for development have been successfully completed and have moved the school on considerably. The wide range of charitable activities is supported very well with one child remarking, 'We shouldn't think about ourselves all the time but what we can do for others'.

SIAMS report June 2016 St Luke's Church of England Primary School Oldham OL4 5RV