



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Parbold Douglas CofE Academy

Lancaster Lane
Parbold
Wigan
WN8 7HS

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 30th January, 2014

Date of last inspection: January, 2009 – as Parbold Douglas VA Primary

School's unique reference number: 137127

Headteacher: Paul Smith

Inspector's name and number: Neville Norcross NS403

Academy Context

The school converted as a self-sponsored academy in September, 2011. The sponsorship was supported by the Diocese of Blackburn. In 2009 it was designated as a National Support School and in 2013 a National Teaching School. There have been no recent changes of significance to the context of the academy or to the key personnel. Some staff changes have taken place since the last inspection and these have enabled the academy to further develop the quality of teaching and the distinctiveness of its Christian character.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Parbold Douglas as a Church of England academy are outstanding

- Christian values shape, support and sustain the academic achievement, personal development and well-being of all pupils.
- Relationships at all levels are informed by Christian values and guarantee a high level of pastoral support for all members of the school community
- The creative and challenging Religious Education (RE) enables pupils to think deeply about and to understand issues of ultimate concern.
- The vision and passion of all leaders ensure that the academy is always on course to fulfil its mission – For Christ and Learning

Areas to improve

- Develop the classroom quiet areas so that they become more inter-active in order to create more opportunities for personal prayer and reflection
- Provide a more structured approach to the planning of worship in order to ensure that a broad and balanced programme of themes is covered
- Formalise the governors' involvement in strategic planning so that church school issues remain a high priority within the academy's agenda

The academy, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at

meeting the needs of all learners

The motto, 'For Christ and Learning' was introduced when the school became an academy. It now shapes the thinking and determines the priorities of the academy. Explicit Christian values permeate every aspect of academy life and this creates an ethos that enables pupils to achieve academic standards and progress that are above national expectations. On entering the academy, the first display invites responses from all members of the school community on the value that is the current focus. One child pointed out that, 'It's the first thing you see because our values are so important.' Christian values are the 'language of the academy' because they inform all decisions about policy and practice and particularly the relationships. Whilst the academy serves an area where levels of deprivation are well below national norms there is a strong emphasis placed upon meeting the needs of those pupils that are recognised as being vulnerable. One boy with acute needs has blossomed within this environment as a result of the understanding, friendship and intervention from staff and pupils alike. Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Pupils respond with sensitivity and maturity to the 'big questions' that are now an integral part of so much of the curriculum. Pupils respond with confidence to questions around such challenging topics as forgiveness, death and the kingdom of God. Each classroom has an area for religious education but, unlike the display in the entrance hall, they are not sufficiently interactive to further enhance pupils' spiritual development. The relationships between all members of the school community are excellent. They are characterised by mutual respect and a genuine sense of community. At the heart of these relationships are the school's values such as Respect, Compassion and Friendship. Pupils are able to make links between these values and the choices they make. The religious education curriculum, together with the daily act of worship, ensures that pupils understand the roots of the values within the Christian faith. The school's links with overseas projects such as the Pearl of Africa choir enable children to encounter those with different needs and cultures, although their understanding of faiths and cultures found locally and nationally is less secure. Religious education plays an important role in its contribution to the Christian character of the school. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of the Christian faith that makes a significant contribution to their moral and social development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupil surveys demonstrate very clearly that daily worship is not only enjoyed but is also at the centre of the school's spiritual life. Pupils speak with confidence about the way in which worship shapes their thinking and their actions. Similar sentiments are expressed by parents who value the school's worshipping links with the church. On one Sunday each term the church is closed and worship is held in the school hall which sends an important message to the pupils about the importance of worship and the shared sense of purpose between school and church. The worship is distinctively Christian in character. It always begins with a Bible quote and the lighting of three candles representing Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Daily worship is the driver for the school's values. The themes are planned around the school's core values which ensures that pupils have a thorough understanding of their Biblical context and the way in which they can be applied to a whole range of situations. The planning of these themes however lacks structure which opens up the possibility that the overall plan may lack breadth and balance. Worship makes a significant contribution towards pupils' spiritual development. They understand the importance of prayer and readily engage in opportunities to do so. Every child has a personal space for reflection within the school grounds and they respond with dignity to quiet times of reflection during the school day. Daily worship provides not only inspiration but also a deep understanding of the person of Jesus. One child gave an extremely thoughtful explanation of the reason why Jesus is sometimes referred to as a shield. The school has responded effectively to the area for improvement from the last inspection by introducing an informal but very effective system for the evaluation of worship. Children's views are taken seriously and they consistently inform future plans. Prefects are given responsibility, with guidance, for the planning and delivery of worship in their allotted classes, on a weekly basis. This highlights the importance of worship for both leader and listener. The

efficient and very effective worship subject leader ensures that governors are kept well informed through his termly reports.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education is given the status of a 'core subject'. This leads to standards that are above national expectations. These standards apply equally to pupils' subject knowledge and to their ability to apply this knowledge in a wide range of circumstances. The pupils often make reference to their 'deep learning' and 'deep conversations' which accurately describe the way in which they are stimulated to grapple with some of the big questions within Christianity and other world faiths. As part of this strategy, each classroom has a 'Buzz Box' in which pupils can place any 'big questions' that they would like to explore. Teachers are not afraid to take risks in presenting challenges to the pupils. In one lesson the word 'omniscient' became a topic of conversation. Pupils make good progress within lessons although it is more difficult to judge longer-term progress because of the recent introduction of a new system of assessment. The quality of teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Conversations with pupils illustrate the impact of this teaching and the 'deep learning' that is taking place. Pupils appreciate the time taken by teachers to write reflective comments after some pieces of work. This enables them to know how to improve their work. These are in addition to the more formal national levels that are also passed on to pupils. The governors have adopted the new diocesan syllabus and teachers have adapted it to good effect. They annotate their plans after each lesson in order to evaluate their effectiveness and learn from past experience. The newly appointed subject leader has shown imagination and enthusiasm in the way that he has approached his role. In a comparatively short period of time he has established the foundations of a very effective assessment system, introduced the new syllabus and implemented a thorough approach for reporting to governors. Pupils' work is closely monitored in order to ensure that appropriate standards are being met. Teachers are given detailed feedback from this monitoring to enable them to build upon their good practice.

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

The leaders and governors have shown determination in ensuring that a drive for high standards does not compromise the personal development and well-being of pupils. They can describe the way in which the academy's Christian character and values are at the heart of its success. The academy motto, 'For Christ and Learning' is articulated and understood by all members of the school community. It sums up the academy's priorities and shapes its thinking. The pupils are currently working on a child-friendly version of this motto and their initial responses to this task demonstrate a maturity and understanding beyond their years. Leaders and governors, supported by church members, show a very high degree of pastoral concern for all members of the school community. This is illustrated well by the response to tragic situations involving pupils and parents. A weekly prayer group, led by the vicar, is available to all members of staff. This is well attended and greatly appreciated by members of staff who recognise the Christian concern shown through the local church. Leaders and governors ensure that both worship and RE meet statutory requirements. Governors now receive detailed information on developments in RE and worship from the subject leader. This has enabled them to fulfil a more pro-active role within the strategic planning of church school issues although it has not always been so strong. There is a very strong focus on professional development that contributes significantly to Christian leadership both within and beyond the academy. The partnership with the local church is a great strength of the academy. Mutual respect and support enable both institutions to flourish and to fulfil their mission to the school, the local community and beyond. The vicar was described as 'having a presence' within the academy because of his time commitment, teaching and level of pastoral support.

SIAMS report January, 2014 Parbold Douglas CofE Academy, Wigan. WN8 7HS

