



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

### St Barnabas Church of England Primary School

St Barnabas Road, Leicester. LE5 4BD

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**This inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Leicester**

Local authority: Leicester City

Dates of inspection: 19 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 13 and 29 January 2010

School's unique reference number: 120187

Headteacher: Susan Poole

Inspector's name and number: Marie Sandford (Jo Fageant 104, assessor)

#### School context

St Barnabas is a large, popular primary school serving a multi-cultural area within the city of Leicester. There are 345 pupils on roll aged 3 to 11 years. About 51% are Muslims, 26% Hindus and 12% Sikhs with approximately 80% of pupils speaking English as an additional language. The school underwent a major building programme completed in 2013 with the previous vicarage now forming part of the school building. St Barnabas Church closed in July 2011 and, since then, the congregation has worshipped in the school. In addition, the incumbent retired in July 2013 and has not been replaced. The long standing headteacher is leaving at the end of the current academic year to pursue new opportunities.

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

- The school's Christian values underpin all decisions including those relating to inclusion, attendance and personal development.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are a strength with learners having a high degree of understanding and respect for diversity and difference.
- Pupils value times for personal prayer and reflection and speak sensitively of their own spiritual journey.
- There are strong relationships between all groups. All speak highly about the impact of the embedded Christian values.

#### Areas to improve

- Establish a rigorous system of self-evaluation of the impact of the school's distinctiveness on its effectiveness as a church school, involving children, parents, staff and governors, in order to secure further improvement.
- Develop increased opportunities for learners to plan and lead worship in order to further enhance the impact of worship.
- Explain the distinctively Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in order to develop learners understanding.

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

St Barnabas is a warm, welcoming school where pupils and adults are encouraged to reflect on the nine Christian values adopted by the school. All feel valued and cared for within an atmosphere of Christian love and understanding. Attendance is high and the compassion shown in granting leave to families with immediate family living abroad contributes to this. Good behaviour is evident across the school with learners encouraged to resolve conflict by reflecting on the core values. Many learners start at the school well below age related expectations but standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen in recent years to be above national averages in all areas in 2014. The school's achievements in meeting the needs of disadvantaged learners have been recognised nationally. The core values, including compassion and justice, are clearly embedded and expressed by all members of the school community. By relating the values back to the teachings of Jesus, adults reinforce the Christian distinctiveness of these values. As one child observed, 'Jesus taught us to love one another.' The Christian value of compassion can be seen in action through the fundraising events for the RSPCA – the charity selected democratically by all involved with the school. The school is now in a position to evaluate the impact of the values on the lives and achievements of all learners. Pupils and staff recognise that the wealth of displays around the school and in the classrooms and the areas for reflection affirm that this is a church school. Key Christian festivals are celebrated with and appreciated by the school community with one parent commenting, 'We all feel part of one, large family, whatever our faith.' The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners whether they are Christian, of other faiths, or of none are strengths in this multicultural school where there is a highly developed respect for diversity and difference. This is reflected in the annual 'multicultural summer fayre' held at the school and the Christian pilgrimage for Year 6 pupils which concludes at the cathedral. The school follows the Leicester City RE syllabus 'Harmony and Diversity' which contributes both to the inclusive Christian character of the school through learning about and celebrating diversity and learners recognition of the importance of RE in their own lives. In addition to the RE syllabus, cross curricular opportunities for teaching RE are sought and learners confidently ask 'big questions' such as 'God, why do poorly people die?'

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

Good quality collective worship is at the heart of this school community. All members see the importance of worship in the life of the school with staff describing it as 'uplifting' and a 'time to pause and reflect during a busy school day.' Learners value the time to reflect and pray, seeking opportunities for their own spiritual development, including making use of the quiet rooftop garden. The school follows the diocesan themes for worship or focuses on the Christian values adopted by the school with regular use being made of Biblical material and local Anglican traditions during worship to enhance spiritual development. The Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is yet to be made explicit to learners. Staff are involved in evaluating collective worship and governors have recently met with learners to discuss their views but the evaluations have yet to be analysed in order to further enhance worship. Although learners participate in the preparation for worship, including selecting and playing music, they have limited opportunities to plan and lead worship. Following the retirement of the incumbent, the school has established strong links with a local mission partnership and, as a result, local clergy lead collective worship regularly. The school's core values are recognised in the vibrant displays around the school and in reflective areas in classrooms. The striking stained glass window in the foyer is a focal point for the values and reminds all of St Barnabas the Encourager. Prayer stones are available and used regularly by learners, governors and visitors to the school. Learners enjoy nominating each other for good Samaritan awards, justifying their reasons for nominations. Such awards are celebrated during collective worship.

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

Leaders at all levels have a good understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness, promoting the chosen Christian values and placing them at the centre of school life. Decisions by the headteacher, made jointly with governors, are rooted in distinctly Christian values. Representatives of the governing body have liaised with the diocese during the process of recruiting a new headteacher to ensure the centrality of the church school ethos. Governors emphasise the distinctively Christian character, with one governor stating 'the school was originally founded by the church and now it is the church,' referring to the worshipping congregation enabled to worship in the school following the closure of the church. Strong links with the local mission partnership have been established and sustained. This has resulted in local clergy leading collective worship and the appointment of a church youth worker to work within the school for one day per week. Diocesan training undertaken by the senior leadership team, the headteacher as collective worship co-ordinator, the RE co-ordinator and governors highlights the importance shown to RE and collective worship and to ensuring the effectiveness of the school as a church school. Although some evaluation has taken place recently regarding collective worship and the chosen values, staff and governors have yet to fully embed the self-evaluation of this school as a church school in order to secure further improvements. Parents recognise the impact of the school on the local community and hold senior leaders in high regard. Parents particularly value the fact that staff are approachable and support their children, always welcoming them with a smile and caring for their children.