



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

### Ancaster Church of England Primary School

Mercia Drive  
Ancaster  
Grantham  
NG32 3QQ

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Lincoln**

Local authority: Lincolnshire  
Date of inspection: 21 October 2015  
Date of last inspection: October 2010  
School's unique reference number: 120512  
Headteacher: Sam Eden  
Inspector's name and number: Jackie Sheldrake 255

#### School context

Ancaster Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average primary school. Its 151 pupils live mainly in the village of Ancaster and almost all are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs is at the national average. Pupil numbers have grown significantly since the last inspection and in particular over the last year. The headteacher was appointed in September 2014 following a year as acting headteacher. Recent building work has provided two additional classrooms and the refurbishment of a number of areas throughout the school.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ancaster as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The leadership and vision of the headteacher, senior staff and governors in securing and promoting a strong and distinctive Christian ethos that values and nurtures all.
- Clearly defined Christian values that are understood and lived out inspire high quality relationships and motivate all pupils to learn, make progress and achieve well.
- The centrality of collective worship and its impact on the spiritual and moral development of all those present.
- The strong and supportive partnership with St Martin's Church and with the parent body enhances the experiences of all and strengthens the school's place in the community.

#### Areas to improve

- In collective worship develop a system of review that encourages and records the observations and reflections of those present and informs future development.
- In religious education (RE) widen pupils' knowledge of the major events in the life of Jesus and the early church.

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

Christian values impact strongly on all aspects of daily life in this happy, inclusive and deeply caring school. These values and the school's Christian foundation are both proclaimed and celebrated at every opportunity. The belief that all are made in the image of God and that everyone has something to contribute is consistently upheld. The application of these guiding principles nurture pupils' self-belief, foster inclusion and enable very good relationships and pupil behaviour. High quality teaching and learning experiences enable all groups to achieve and to 'be the best that can be'. Achievement and rates of progress compared with local and national data are at least good with many examples of excellent progress and attainment. Attendance is good and exclusion is non-existent. Pupils enjoy school life, feel safe and know that they are valued for themselves. They see their school community as 'a big family' and enjoy working and playing together. Their enthusiasm for helping others is reflected in the way older pupils act as buddies to those younger and newly arrived at the school. The school's declared values of respect, creativity, friendship, achievement and honesty are understood, well established and underpin all areas of daily life in school. Pupils, staff and governors confidently express their understanding and experience of these values making links with the Christian story and biblical text. A creative based curriculum, together with enrichment weeks and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, successfully focuses on developing the whole child. Within this environment and through these experiences pupils' wellbeing and academic and personal development is ensured. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is strong. This is especially so through the influence of collective worship and RE. These both support and underline the school's Christian ethos and support pupils' growing understanding and experience of other faith communities. Pupils show a clear understanding of the need for tolerance and the importance of respecting the views and opinions of others. They say, 'People might think about different things', and 'Sometimes people have great ideas'. Pupils speak of enjoying RE and of gaining much from their involvement in collective worship. Parents speak highly of what the school provides for their children and praise the work of the staff. They value the open door policy and the strong family character of the school. Parents praise the way those newly arrived quickly make friends and settle. They comment, 'It was overwhelming when we first came, the warmth and the welcome.'

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

Collective worship is central to the nurture of the Christian ethos that pervades the life of the school. It is a happy time which enables the whole school family to come together in celebration, prayer and praise. Pupils speak of coming together 'to think about Jesus and God'. Each occasion enables all those present to feel closely involved as they explore Christian values through story, song and reflection. Excellent delivery impacts strongly on pupils of all ages and reaches out to adults present. High quality digital displays and music, together with pupils' wholehearted singing, enrich the occasion and ensure a deep and lasting impression on those present. The strong focus on prayer and reflection, including time to share with others, contributes significantly to pupils' outstanding level of spiritual and moral development. Pupils regularly respond to these experiences by adding their reflections, poems and art work, often produced at home, to a central display. Planning is thorough and provides clear guidance for the development of themes. Explicit links are made between school values, the Christian story and biblical text. Pupils are able to make a strong connection between the life and teachings of Jesus, Christian values and their own lives. They are able to demonstrate some understanding of The Holy Trinity through their knowledge of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are less secure in their understanding of Pentecost and Ascension. However, the school acknowledges that teaching about these key events in RE as well as worship would strengthen pupils' spiritual development. Pupils enjoy collective worship with its variety of settings and worship leaders from the school, the church and wider community. They value 'learning together' and 'listening to other peoples' ideas'. Older pupils speak with enthusiasm of their role in planning and leading worship and of their wish for greater involvement. The support of a foundation

governor, an ordained priest, and regular services at St Martin's Church richly contribute to worship. As a result worship makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of Christian belief and practice. Since the last inspection the evaluation process has developed and includes the Big Conversation. This process is particularly effective in gauging pupils' views and gathering their ideas. Pupils value and enjoy these team meetings where they 'put ideas together' and come up with a suggestions. Less effective is the evidence gathered through reflection logs. The school recognises that developing a system to reflect all viewpoints continues to inform the effectiveness of worship. Parents praise the positive impact collective worship makes on their children and greatly appreciate the welcome they receive at services held in school and in church.

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

The headteacher's leadership and vision in promoting and strengthening the Christian foundation of the school is outstanding. In this he has the full support and encouragement of the governing body and deputy headteacher. Together, with senior leaders and members of staff, they work with commitment and energy to realise the school's mission and aims. High quality teaching and learning experiences ensure that achievement and progress throughout the school is at a high level. Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are a priority and great care is taken to provide for all areas of development. Governors' close involvement in monitoring and evaluating school effectiveness addresses aspects of church school distinctiveness including the leadership of the school as a church school. Foundation governors make a particularly valuable contribution to this process through their regular visits and contact with pupils and staff. Those newly appointed to the school are challenged on their ability to support and further encourage the school's Christian ethos. The views of staff, pupils and parents are regularly sought and are seen to influence policy and practice. Pupils have a strong voice through the work of the school council and through their involvement in the Big Conversation. Both development areas from the previous inspection have been addressed. A particular highlight is the promotion and strengthening of the school's church school status. Aspects of church school leadership and distinctiveness and their development are regularly addressed through staff meetings and professional development. Members of staff and governors are well supported in this area through training and support they receive from the diocesan education team. Collective worship and RE enjoy high status within the whole school curriculum and their delivery meets statutory requirements. Both areas are led by a committed and well informed subject leader. She is closely involved in furthering the school's distinctively Christian character. The school benefits from strong links with other local schools through its Achieving Quality Together partnership. Through the sharing of staff expertise and resources these links have proved to be mutually beneficial to all. The school enjoys close and mutually supportive links with St Martin's Church. The strong partnership with parents is well illustrated through their involvement in many areas of school life including after school clubs and enrichment activities. The recent growth in school numbers reflects parents' high regard for what the school provides for their children.

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