



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St John's Church of England Primary School

Godly Lane
Rishworth
Sowerby Bridge
West Yorkshire
HX6 4QR
Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Calderdale
Date of inspection: 12th January 2015
Date of last inspection: July 2010
School's unique reference number: 139040
Headteacher: J Wasyliw
Inspector's name and number: C A Roberts 469

School context

St John's CE Primary is a rural school on the edge of the moors near Halifax, serving the village of Rishworth and surrounding area. There are 135 pupils on the school roll, most of whom are White British. There are a smaller number than average of children eligible for the pupil premium, and a slightly higher number of children on the special needs register. There are no children with a statement of special educational need. Since the last SIAMS the school has converted to Academy status and an acting headteacher has been in post since September 2014. After a period of interregnum a new vicar was appointed in June 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's Rishworth as a Church of England school are good

- The commitment and dedication of the acting headteacher, all staff and governors in promoting the school as a church school to ensure that children are cared for and nurtured to achieve good academic and personal goals.
- Leaders and governors have a clear picture for future development needs of the school as a church school.
- The exemplary relationships and behaviour supported by implicit Christian values. This results in children who are happy, confident and enjoy coming to school.
- Worship and religious education (RE) support the Christian character of the school and enhance spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Positive links with the church, parents and community.

Areas to improve

- Review the vision and aims of the school as a church school with all stakeholders in the light of explicit Christian values to further strengthen the Christian character of the school.
- Develop a rigorous and systematic approach for governor monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school to ensure continued development from good to outstanding.
- Ensure worship is monitored and evaluated systematically and linked to the school calendar to ensure the impact on the school community continues to develop.
- Ensure themes for worship are cohesive, linked to explicit Christian values and ensure development of theological concepts such as the Trinity and also the Christian festival of Pentecost. This will support children further in their understanding of worship, faith and Anglican practices.

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

St John's Primary is a very welcoming and caring school where children are proud of their learning, their friends and their teachers. They spontaneously and enthusiastically show visitors their displays and learning environment without prompts from adults. Christian values, although often implicit, of love and respect underpin the Christian character of the school. These values are modelled by the acting headteacher and staff who spend a great deal of time supporting individual needs by having clear tracking strategies to ensure all children achieve their best both academically and personally. Consequently children feel valued and understood, they enjoy coming to school and 'Find learning fun'. Relationships and behaviour are outstanding. This individual care of children and inclusivity throughout school ensures pupils achieve well, not only academically but spiritually and personally. Religious education (RE) and worship further enhance the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children for example by exploring themes such as World Leaders and Pilgrimages. However, there is no complacency with leaders recognising that the vision statement is in need of review to encourage ownership by all stakeholders and to further strengthen the Christian character of the school. Further plans include a prayer week, to develop more reflection areas around school and the strengthening of church school links which are already good. Children recognise that Christian values are important to the school and state 'It is important to be trustworthy and kind'. Consequently they enjoy fundraising and charitable giving. Through supporting a local food bank, through national and international charities such as Save the Children, Farm Africa and Hand to Hand ministries in Peru, children experience the Christian value of service. Children have some understanding of Biblical accounts and how these relate to their lives, but would benefit from a planned approach across the curriculum to learning about explicit Christian values linked to Bible accounts.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship at St John's Primary is valued by the whole community. Consequently children's attitudes to worship are reverent and respectful. They engage with the leader in a positive and enthusiastic way and sing wholeheartedly. A variety of leaders ensure that worship is interesting and different. For example school staff, local clergy and Hand to Mouth Puppets. Themes are planned termly and cover major Christian festivals and some SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) themes. Although themes sometimes include explicit Christian values, worship would have more impact on the school community if there was a more cohesive approach, linking weekly themes together with explicit Christian values. Nonetheless worship has a good impact on children and they can relate some Bible stories to their own lives. For example the story of David and Goliath children state 'Don't judge a book by its cover' and 'Respect your enemies'. Children are clear that worship can help people in their lives and state it helps them to 'Reflect on your actions and learn about respect'. However, they are less clear about the meaning of the Trinity and its significance to Anglican worship.

Prayer is well developed across the school day and in worship time. Children enjoy writing their own prayers for a variety of services in church and in school and state 'Prayer makes you feel calm and reflective' and 'It makes you relaxed'. Christian festivals often provide opportunity for children to plan and lead worship, for example the highly popular carols around the Christmas tree in church, where children write wishes for each other. This supports their understanding of the Church year and Christian symbols. They are however unsure about the significance of Pentecost. A real strength of worship is the way children's views about worship are gathered through the 'assembly council'. Overall monitoring and evaluation of worship is undertaken informally and leaders recognise the need to ensure this is more rigorous and systematic and linked to the school monitoring calendar, to ensure it aids future development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Children enjoy RE because the subject has a high status in school and teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Pupil progress and achievement is good and mostly in line or above age related expectations. Children say they enjoy RE because 'We learn about creation stories and can do art work' and 'We learn about different religions, which is interesting'. Assessment is regularly undertaken and children given feedback about their work. They have some idea about how to improve their learning in RE. Leaders recognise that assessment and target setting is an area that will need developing in future, due to the new RE syllabus. Children demonstrate a good knowledge of Christianity, including Christianity across the world. Planning for RE is thorough and learning activities address both learning about and learning from religion. For example an outstanding Year 6 lesson focuses on discussing the Book of Proverbs, exploring a selection of proverbs in depth, applying them to pupils' lives and then writing relevant wise sayings for today. In this way skills of enquiry, analysis and interpretation are developed as children work both independently and together. Leadership of RE is strong, with some outstanding practice; the coordinator has developed a clear action plan for future development needs based on the necessity to review schemes of work and assessment in light of a new syllabus for RE. Plans are also underway to monitor lessons through observations of teaching and learning. Currently book scrutiny is carried out and the co-ordinator moderates assessment. RE makes a very good contribution to the Christian character of the school.

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

The acting headteacher is a very committed leader who is inspirational and forward thinking. Her Christian vision for the school is clearly articulated and promoted, based on implicit Christian Gospel values. All staff are keen to support the Christian character of the school and to ensure they are good role models for children. Plans are underway to review the vision and aims statement with all stakeholders to further enhance and develop the school's Christian character. Governors are passionate about their school. They are hard-working and knowledgeable about all aspects of school life including standards of attainment. They regularly attend worship and school functions. Some governors have taken part in informal monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school. They would benefit however from a planned and formal monitoring and evaluation timetable linked to the school calendar to ensure all aspects of the church school distinctiveness continue to develop. Since the last SIAMS leaders and governors have ensured that the development point for worship has been successfully addressed. They also ensure that both RE and worship have the statutory allocated time and are well resourced. In order to ensure staff of a small school have access to effective professional development, the school collaborates with other small church schools for training and activities, as well as diocesan and external opportunities. Recent training from the Hand to Mouth team and the diocese for all staff and some governors led to staff devising reflection areas for pupils. Also there are plans to hold a prayer week in the spring term so that children are involved in writing new school prayers. Parents are very pleased with the school and particularly 'the care that staff show' for their children. They also feel the school has a 'really

good impact on the local community' because of its connections with the local church. They feel their concerns are listened to and regularly participate in parental questionnaires. Due to the good impact of the ethos of the school, children take part in local as well as national and international service to others. Coupled with this are the school led celebration days and world days, also the very popular church led Fun Club. These greatly enhance their understanding of, and strengthen links with local communities and those around the world.

SIAMS report January 2015 St John's CE Primary, Rishworth, Sowerby Bridge HX6 4QR