



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Holy Trinity Church of England Aided First School

Bell Tower Place
Berwick
Northumberland
TD15 1NB

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland

Dates of inspection: 18th March 2016

Date of last inspection: 13th January 2011

School's unique reference number: 122282

Headteacher: Dawn Groves

Inspector's name and number: Lesley-Anne Craig NS 738

School context

The school is a small first school situated in the heart of the border town of Berwick upon Tweed. The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity CE First School as a Church of England school is outstanding

- The headteacher, senior team and governors provide very strong leadership and ensure the Christian ethos shapes decision making and informs all actions
- Worship is a fundamental aspect of the daily life of the school; the worship programme and the work of local clergy inform and develop the spiritual life of the school
- Religious Education makes a significant contribution towards the Christian character of the school. It challenges pupils' thinking about faith and its place in everyday life.
- Partnerships with the parish are very strong and promote joint responsibility for Christian ethos of the school and its place in the community

Areas to improve

- Develop even further learner access to world faiths by using modern technology more
- Have a coherent strand in the forward planning of the school that addresses the need for developing sustainable leadership of the school as a church school with the necessary support from the diocese
- Create more opportunities for pupils and parents to lead worship

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

At Holy Trinity every child and every adult is valued for their gifts and talents. This is reflected in the high levels of achievement for all children. The school is a peaceful, calm, environment in which to work, learn and achieve. Parents spoke fondly of the schools extensive knowledge of each and every child, and the nurturing and care children receive from the adults. Parent's staff and children speak of the clear example set by the headteacher in the way messages from the Bible are interpreted. Children at this school are filled with confidence and self-belief, driven by the deeply embedded Christian values. One child spoke of the 'expectation that everyone will work hard and behave well.' Parents spoke warmly of the staff at the school and were very clear that when new staff arrive they must 'buy into,' the Christian ethos. Parents also praised the way children and they are welcomed into the school and are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities together which reflect the Christian nature of the school. For example the wide variety of opportunities to explore new gifts and talents from golf to crafts, worship at the school, and at the Church, special events that bring the community into the life of the school, such as the 'Circle of Peace' and general events where the values from the school permeate the wider community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school's arrangements for collective worship meet statutory requirements. Worship is a central activity to everything that happens. Whole-school worship and class worship are very well established and are used to both familiarise pupils with Anglican traditions and practice as well as provide opportunities for reflection, peace, praise and singing. Very moving class worship focussed on the use of singing and prayer whilst a whole school worship showed how the care that older pupils give to younger pupils is part of the everyday life of the school. Parent attendance at worship is both frequent and well established. Parents spoke extremely well about the messages they and their children get from worship and how their children come home and talk about worship and raise questions as result of what they have seen, heard and participated in. One child asked their mother to explain 'what God was really like,' as result of something that had been said in worship. Parents report that these thought- provoking questions are frequently generated as a result of worship. Pupils can speak confidently of their understanding of Jesus Christ, and God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As the main focus of the worship at the time of the inspection was the 'Easter Story', children were able to make strong connections about sacrifice and its place in Christian faith. Anglican traditions and symbols were all extremely familiar to the children and staff of the school and hold a very important place in worship for all participants. Prayer is used frequently in both class and whole school worship with the school prayer featuring in many areas of the school. This could perhaps be used even more widely, for example at the beginning of governor and parent meetings. Worship is evaluated but this perhaps could be done more frequently in order to inform forward planning and increase opportunities for more parents and children to lead worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The leadership and delivery of Religious Education (RE) is outstanding with clear evidence of the development of learning and understanding as pupils' progress through the school. In the youngest classes pupils can speak about basic religious facts and recount Bible stories at a simplistic level. For example a Reception class pupil described Judas as 'a bad man.' Knowledge develops as pupils progress to understand religious symbols, deeper meaning of messages delivered in Bible stories and an understanding of some other world faiths. A wide variety of techniques are used including drama, storytelling and thinking skills. All pupils at all levels display extraordinarily high levels of literacy. The quality of presentation and information in pupils' books reflects the very high levels of achievement. Pupils have had opportunities to explore Judaism and Diwali recently. Whilst this introduction to other faiths has been well- received,

new technology could be used to enhance access even further in light of the geographical location of the school. Most importantly, children and staff can relate religious teachings to how they conduct themselves in life. The quality of teaching and learning in RE enhances the development of the social moral and spiritual development of all members of the Holy Trinity Community. Parents, governors, children and staff gave numerous examples of how lessons learnt in RE and shared at home, impacted their own conduct both in the school and in wider life. Special events like the 'sleep over,' confirm children's understanding of sharing, responsibility and kindness. Whilst adults demonstrate the same values in their contribution to after school activities and their relationships and understanding shown to parents and carers. Numerous examples were given, these include parents staff and pupil support for a wide range of events domestically and at the school that have required additional support and love. It was described as 'everyone pulling together at times of need whatever the need is.'

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

The headteacher is exemplary in her modelling of Christian values and all stakeholders respect her and follow her lead. All adults are given leadership responsibility and the school has encouraged colleagues to develop their leadership skills. All staff follow the headteachers model of strategically planning and evaluating every aspect of the schools work which in turn substantially benefits all learners. Particularly notable is the programme that identifies and cares for all children's literacy needs and involves a wide range of parents contributing to outcomes for children regardless of ability or background. The governing body are strong advocates of the schools Christian mission in the community and contribute significantly to spreading the Christian message through their actions. The local vicar is a very proactively involved in the day-to-day life of the school and it is a common occurrence for parents and children to visit the local church. A special programme trained pupils from the school to be tour guides for other children visiting the church. This combined pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity with their familiarity with places of worship and Christian traditions whilst developing their own leadership skills. The school plays a leading role in supporting other local schools in their efforts to achieve excellence. The school has very successfully used the SIAMS Evaluation Schedule to summarise and accurately judge its progress. Work has begun to identify leadership potential and succession planning; the governing body are involved in the planning for the future of the school as a church school. The Chair of Governors is fully conversant with the potentially destabilising structures that may come into play locally and nationally over the next few years and is working closely with the Diocese and Local Authority to continue to achieve the very best outcomes for Holy Trinity First School.

SIAMS report March 2016 Holy Trinity CE First School TD15 INB