



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **Gainford VC Primary**

Low Road  
Gainford  
Darlington  
DL2 3DR

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Durham**

Local authority: Durham

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Date of last inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010

School's unique reference number: 114222

Headteacher: Howard Blindt

Inspector's name and number: Carole Snelling NS 519

### **School context**

Gainford Voluntary Controlled Primary is a smaller than average primary school of 79 pupils, in a semi rural area. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are entitled to pupil premium funding is broadly in line with the national average. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is small and in some groups has closed. Progress and attainment are good; fluctuations occur because of small year groups. In summer 2015 results were above the national average for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Gainford Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The teaching of Jesus "to love your neighbour as yourself" is lived out and is seen in the excellent behaviour and caring, supportive relationships between all in the school community.
- Christian values are embedded in the daily life of the school, contributing to the good progress and attainment of every pupil. All are valued and nurtured as children of God and academic and personal achievements are equally celebrated.

- Outstanding teaching of Religious Education (RE) makes a significant contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, (SMSC) their understanding of Christianity and social diversity.
- Excellent curricular opportunities for SMSC have allowed children to flourish and to develop as rounded, confident and articulate individuals.
- Established and highly effective links with the local church and community have ensured that Gainford School is at the heart of the community it serves making a positive contribution to village life.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Establish a formal system of evaluation in collective worship to enable the children to effectively contribute to further development.
- Further enhance the already flourishing relationship with the local church by exploring ways to increase the occasions when collective worship is held in church, using the opportunity to develop children's understanding of the Eucharist.

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

Gainford Primary is a fully inclusive school with Christian values at its heart, where all are welcomed, supported and challenged. Children's needs are very well met. The school is committed to developing the whole child, there is a strong Christian ethos based on the teaching that all are created in God's image. Individual gifts and talents are nurtured through a range of curriculum opportunities both in class and after school. The Christian values of love, hope, forgiveness and compassion are explicitly taught and lived out implicitly in the life of the school. This is evidenced in the excellent behaviour and caring relationships. Forgiveness and reconciliation allow for any minor disagreements to be resolved. Children enjoy coming to school, they feel safe and secure; their attendance is above the national average. Pupils' thoughtful behaviour makes a strong contribution to successful learning and creates a positive ethos. As a result the attainment and progress of all pupils from their starting point is good and is often above the national average. There is very good support for children with special educational needs and consequently the school has a higher than average percentage of these learners. The culture of aspiration, support and challenge is reflected in the encouragement and positive praise given by adults. Regular celebrations of achievements contribute to the pupils' self esteem and their growing sense of self worth. Children enjoy outstanding teaching in RE lessons. The teaching of world faiths, Christianity and festivals contributes to pupils growing awareness of the multi faith, multicultural world in which they live. RE includes opportunities for developing SMSC. Learning about social diversity, allows pupils to develop positive attitudes to the beliefs and values of others. Christian values explored in worship are often followed up in RE lessons; e.g. Year 2 pupils are learning about compassion and the importance of prayer. The use of the SEAL curriculum, opportunities to contribute to local and national charities, residential visits, decision making at School Council, a Buddy system and links with the local church and community, all contribute to very good SMCS development.

Children develop stewardship and active care for others. The school has recently embarked on the Rights and Respect school award. The children have an appreciation that this is a church school and that church and school work together to promote Christian values and practices.

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

Worship is an integral and important part of the life of the school. Children know that this is a special time, they are respectful and engaged. Children know that this is a time for quiet reflection and celebration. Leaders encourage pupils to participate, to offer their thoughts and prayers and they do so confidently. Worship fulfils its stated intention of being meaningful, thought provoking, relevant and enjoyable, it is distinctly Christian. The worship coordinator assisted by foundation governors have produced a two year cycle of themes, which is kept under review. The themes reflect the Anglican calendar, festivals of major world faiths, Bible stories and topical issues. The Christian values of compassion, endurance, courage, hope, humility, friendship and forgiveness give a framework for the teachings and life of Jesus. The RE co-ordinator links themes in worship to topics in RE providing outstanding opportunities for spiritual development. Worship is led, planned and delivered by all teaching staff, visiting local clergy and by the children in class assemblies. Worship is held daily either as whole school, key stage, class and Friday Celebration Assembly to which the governor of the week is invited. The recognisable elements of worship are included, prayer, thanksgiving, Biblical stories, song, drama and quiet reflection. Prayer is an important aspect of daily life in the school. Pupils know the Lord's prayer, grace and prayers for the end of the school day. Pupils use quiet areas and a prayer tree for personal prayer; this contributes to their developing spirituality. In response to the refugee crisis, a child had written this prayer "Make us see that we can all have compassion and our compassion could change peoples' lives" The values explored in worship impact on the school community. An example of worship inspiring action is the pupils' decision to fund raise for UNICEF to support refugee families; this arose from the teaching of Jesus about compassion. A recent pupil survey showed that "pupils recognise the value of worship and know that through it they contribute to the life of the school". Children have expressed preferences for the type of worship they especially enjoy. Suggestions for development include increased worship in church and more use of drama. Worship held in church is a particular favourite of pupils, as they are more involved in delivery and families attend. A formal and regular system of evaluation and review would allow pupils to contribute to the way in which worship develops in the future.

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

The head teacher and the highly committed team of staff and governors, inspired by the belief that every child is a child of God, have created and delivered the vision for the school, providing a safe, welcoming and happy Christian school set within the heart of the community. Academic potential is fulfilled, Christian values are explicit, all are nurtured and children's progress and attainment are good. Celebration of achievement, encouragement and praise are freely given, adding to each individual's feeling of self worth and value. The school is constructively self critical of its performance. There is rigorous and accurate school self evaluation, which contributes to good academic progress and school development. The subject leader has attended training in RE about

Outdoor Environments for spiritual development and the Diocesan RE syllabus. Foundation governors provide very good support and challenge and contribute to the distinctive Christian ethos. The school is held in excellent regard by the local community, with high levels of stakeholder satisfaction. Parents value the opportunities for children to explore Christianity, different faiths, their spirituality and to express their own views and to challenge injustice. They feel that every child is acknowledged and has a voice. Children are fully involved in contributing to the development of the school through the School Council. Children take the initiative in deciding which charities local and international will be supported by fundraising, acting out Christian stewardship and love for others. Older children play an important role in nurturing and caring for their younger peers, they are certainly "learning together along life's journey". Partnership with the local church and community is highly effective and productive. Visits take place to Saint Mary's Church as part of RE and for worship. The head has established links with local church schools, the Diocese and other local schools. Succession planning opportunities have been afforded by developing staff skills and talents and preparing them to undertake leadership roles in other church schools.

The school is compliant in holding a daily act of collective worship and in delivering RE.

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