



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St. Michael's-on-Wyre Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hall Lane
St. Michael's-on-Wyre
Preston
Lancashire
PR3 0UA

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 19th June 2014

Date of last inspection: 31st March 2009

School's unique reference number: 119544

Headteacher: Mrs Cathy Brough

Inspector's name and number: Linda Roberts NS523

School context

St. Michael's-on-Wyre is a smaller than average primary school with 126 pupils. The school is located within a rural village location. As well as serving the village itself, a number of families choose to travel significant distances so that their children can attend the school. Pupils are from predominantly white British backgrounds. The number of pupils for which the school receives Pupil Premium funding is low. Over the past few years, the number of children with Special Educational Needs has been above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael's-on-Wyre CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Inspired by the headteacher's clear Christian vision for the school, all school leaders ensure that continuous improvement is secured through rigorous self-evaluation.
- Christian values and Biblical teaching are at the heart of school life and have a positive impact upon the behaviour, attitudes and relationships of the whole school community.
- The school, church and wider community work together extremely well making a significant contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas to improve

- Further enhance children's spiritual development by providing opportunities for quiet reflection, prayer and engagement with life's 'big questions' within the classroom environments.
- Develop the increasingly effective monitoring roles of the two Vision and Values Committees by finding ways in which the pupils' group and that of the governors can work in partnership.

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

At St. Michael's-on-Wyre, all aspects of school life are firmly founded upon Christian values. This foundation has been further strengthened by the selection of a core set of values which are lived out by all members of the school community. As a result, relationships within the school are excellent, behaviour is impeccable and the family ethos of the school ensures that all children feel valued, secure and happy. Thoughtful planning for collective worship and religious education ensures that children are able to link the school's values to relevant Bible stories and relate them to personal experience, thus making a valuable contribution to children's spiritual and moral development. Children also demonstrate a willingness to put the school's values into action through a wealth of charitable fund-raising activities, such as the Macmillan coffee morning and for a community defibrillator, and also by their commitment to a range of ecological initiatives within the school grounds. Cultural links with and visits to schools in multi-ethnic localities and a range of international links result in children developing an understanding and acceptance of their place in an increasingly diverse society. The school, church and community have a strong, mutually beneficial and supportive relationship. On the day of inspection, the school was hosting one of its regular community lunches. Year 5 and 6 pupils served lunch to members of the community prior to socialising, in a relaxed and confident manner, whilst enjoying their own meals. Children enter school at broadly average starting points and all groups achieve well during their time at the school. This is due to the school's commitment to meeting the needs of all children. Parents reinforced the inclusive philosophy of the school, describing how families with children with special educational needs choose to travel a distance in order to be able to attend. They commended the staff for meeting the needs of all children, stating that 'staff go above and beyond' and saying that 'children are changed and moulded by the school'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Worship is central to school life and valued by all. Children enjoy worship and often follow up themes covered, linking them to other aspects of their learning. They value what they learn in worship about Jesus saying, 'If we follow what Jesus did, then we are following the path he wants us to take.' Children's experience of worship is enriched by a range of leaders, including school and church staff, as well as visitors from the wider community and diocese. Worship is well planned and incorporates themes taken from the Church year, the school's core values and Biblical teaching. It is also planned to complement weekly worship in church. This reinforces links between church and school and further contributes to the spiritual development of the large number of children whose families worship at the church. Children participate meaningfully when the school worships at church at regular times throughout the year, such as harvest and Advent, thus providing a basis for and understanding of Anglican faith and practice. Children enjoy contributing to worship, as on the day of inspection when the reception class led an act of worship on growth and change. Worship was fully inclusive with sign language being used for all responses. Older children also contributed, leading a time of prayer using prayers that they had written. Children are introduced to the concept of The Trinity through worship and their developing understanding is shown as they pray 'in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. Children are actively involved in the evaluation of worship, citing as evidence positive attitudes, the ability to reflect upon personal meaning and to make suggestions for future development. The school has previously received the diocesan Church Schools Distinctiveness Award for its work in this area. Children understand the importance of prayer saying that 'in any situation you can trust God and pray'. They are provided with opportunities for prayer and personal reflection during acts of worship. They make frequent use of the prayer board in order to contribute prayers for school worship and are encouraged to reflect and pray at a personal level by holding a pebble and placing in water to symbolise the act of prayer. They also make use of quiet spaces outside for reflection and prayer but state that there are limited indoor spaces, especially in their classrooms, where

they can pray or think.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious education has a high profile within the school and has the status of a core subject. The subject is well led by the headteacher, who is aware of the need for succession planning and who has, consequently, ensured that appropriate professional development is in place for colleagues. Children make good progress in religious education and experience a high level of challenge in their learning. As a result, standards are broadly in line with those achieved in other core subjects, with a significant number of children working beyond the level of national expectation. Lessons are planned for systematically using the revised diocesan syllabus and ensure that there is a balance of learning about and from religion. Religious education makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual development as many opportunities are provided for them to reflect upon meaning for their own lives and actions. At the close of a Key Stage 2 lesson, children also prayed confidently following suggestions made by their peers. Younger children's learning is well planned and delivered through a range of practical activities. For example, when learning about creation the children thought about all the wonderful things made by God and then created things themselves from a range of construction and modelling materials. Links with Nepal and Bolivia enhance the religious education curriculum and ensure that children develop an understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural and world-wide faith. This aspect of development is further supported by a research project in Years 5 and 6 where children spoke confidently of the beliefs and practices of Christians in countries such as Greenland and Italy. High quality marking results in children knowing what they need to do to improve their learning. It also challenges them to think more deeply about their learning, posing questions for them to explore and respond to. A rigorous system of assessment is in place which involves older children in regular evaluation of their learning. The subject leader has effective systems in place, involving staff and governors, to moderate teaching and learning in religious education in order to ensure a consistent approach throughout school. These systems include having a detailed portfolio of levelled work and comprehensive tracking systems for pupil progress. These systems result in clearly identified areas for improvement that feed into the school's annual improvement plan and ensure that high standards in religious education are maintained.

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

Leadership is outstanding at all levels and the school is very ably led by the headteacher who has a clear, focused, Christian vision for the school firmly rooted in Christian values. Staff, governors, children and parents have all been involved in aspects of self-evaluation in relation to the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness. This rigorous self-evaluation has resulted in clear identification of areas for future development and well thought out actions required to secure ongoing improvement. Consequently, the area for development from the previous inspection has been addressed highly effectively. Governors are well informed through formal processes and through their very active involvement in the daily life of the school. Their Vision and Values Committee plays an increasingly effective role in monitoring all aspects of worship, religious education and distinctiveness. The leadership role of the children has been encouraged through the formation of their own Vision and Values Committee. This is now working effectively to evidence the positive impact of the school's core values on the distinctive nature of St. Michael's-on-Wyre as a church school. The school recognises the need to explore ways in which these two groups can work together. A strategic view of the identification of staff development needs is ensuring that members of staff are prepared, where applicable, for future roles in church schools.