



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

### Higher Walton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Rosewood Avenue,  
Higher Walton,  
Preston,  
Lancashire.  
PR5 4FE

#### Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Date of last inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> March 2010

School's unique reference number: 119393

Headteacher: Mrs. Joy Headley

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Anne B. Woodcock 445

#### School context

The school serves the mixed socio-economic community of Higher Walton, on the outskirts of Preston. Pupils are also drawn from Bamber Bridge, Hoghton and Walton-le-Dale. The majority of the 107 pupils are of white British heritage with a small minority coming from other ethnic backgrounds. The school supports a higher than average number of children with additional needs. The number of pupils attracting the pupil premium grant is average. The school has experienced significant staff change and disruption since the last inspection.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Higher Walton Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Explicitly expressed and understood Christian values inform and motivate all aspects of the work of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent and are clearly based on their understanding of the school's core values.
- The headteacher's Christian vision and leadership is excellent and is strongly supported by staff and governors who share her passion and concern for the children in their care.
- Strong, purposeful links with the church and other local faith groups effectively support pupils' spiritual and personal growth.

#### Areas to improve

- Explore alternative ways in which to develop regular parental involvement in the church school self-evaluation process.
- Ensure that pupils regularly plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship to enable them to

do so independent of teacher direction.

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

Christian values are highly visible and well understood by all members of the school community. The eight core values, which include trust, tenacity, friendship and forgiveness, were chosen by pupils, staff and governors and agreed by parents, are reflected in the strong, supportive relationships seen across the school. Pupils explain, 'Our motto, *'helping each other to achieve in our Christian family'*, helps us to work together and not to focus on ourselves all the time.' Children are highly motivated and eager to learn. Attendance is above average, reflecting children's enjoyment of learning and endurance. One parent commented, 'My child is thriving at high school because of her nurturing and experiences here.' Pupils are very well-supported and all children, including those with additional needs, are able to make a positive contribution. Children make very good progress and standards of achievement are good. Highly effective use is made of the school's indoor and external environment. Vibrant displays of pupils' work reflect the good quality and breadth of work achieved. Interactive worship and reflection areas are well-used because the children are given regular opportunities to express their ideas openly, in an atmosphere of calm and trust. Exciting cross-curricular themed weeks, which pupils describe as 'amazing and creative', support children's spiritual development extremely well. Pupils have well-developed ideas on issues such as poverty and justice which are reflected in the interactive displays around the school. For example, one child wrote a prayer expressing his hopes for the world, 'I hope that all children will be treated the same and that everyone in Africa will get a proper home with proper facilities.' Religious education (RE) makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children enjoy their lessons, particularly when challenged to express their ideas through drama and art. Visits to places of worship, such as the church, a mosque and a Hindu temple, support pupils' understanding of faiths and cultures.

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

Exceptionally well-planned and led collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. It is delivered creatively by staff, pupils and visitors. Themes are firmly based on core Christian values. Pupils enjoy worship and are eager to participate at all levels. They say, 'All the worship caters for everyone, even the ones who don't believe.' The use of signed opening responses and the school's own blessing reflect the inclusive nature of the worship. Children express their beliefs honestly. One pupil explained that he hadn't always believed in God but, 'Now I believe in God I think I'm a better person.' Worship has a profound impact on pupils' thinking and behaviour. Children say, 'Worship makes you think before you act, could you be doing it in a nicer way using your values?' They talk knowledgeably about Jesus and have a growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils regularly take responsibility for the delivery of worship. For example, older pupils lead worship for younger children and for their peers. They do so with considerable confidence. However, at present they rely on teacher direction for planning. The school recognises that pupils are ready to plan and lead worship with a greater measure of independence and this is an area for development. Prayer and reflection are key features of worship. Children write and use their own prayers, describing prayer as, 'Talking to God and Jesus in your head. If you are worried you should turn to God.' The church supports worship effectively. The vicar leads worship each week, often using Benjie the puppet, to which the children respond very positively. Members of the church and other local faith groups lead occasional acts of worship. The church is used for special services such as the leavers' service. Parents value and attend these services in considerable numbers. Collective worship is monitored and evaluated purposefully. Pupils and staff evaluate worship and governors monitor the impact through observations and discussions.

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

### **school is outstanding**

The headteacher's explicit Christian vision for the school is strongly supported by all members of the school community. Her inspirational leadership has successfully steered the school through some difficult times, ensuring that pupils' personal development and attainment are paramount. Governors have a very clear understanding of their role. The ethos committee is instrumental in ensuring that church school issues are prioritised within whole school improvement planning and that RE and collective worship have a high profile. All issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Governors are fully engaged in the church school self-evaluation process. They monitor and evaluate RE and collective worship effectively, observing lessons and visiting worship regularly. The opportunity taken to strengthen the Christian leadership of the school, through the appointment of a deputy headteacher, has had a very positive impact. Relationships across the school are highly supportive and are clearly based on Christian respect and friendship. Staff work collaboratively, enabling newer members to settle quickly, supporting the ethos of the school. Pupils know that their opinions are valued and acted upon, saying that the trim trail and new lunchtime activities are examples of their ideas. They are proud of their achievements and are eager to take responsibility. Children know that they are more fortunate than others in different parts of the world. They enjoy raising money for charities such as Children in Need and the Bulabakulu Children's Village. The links with the church, local and wider community effectively support pupils' spiritual and personal development. Parents are confident that their children are nurtured within a safe, caring Christian environment. They say that work on the eight core values supports them at home. Parents value the opportunity to share in their children's work and worship and they feel welcomed and included. However, at present parents have limited involvement in the school's self-evaluation process and this has been rightly identified as an area for improvement.

SIAMS report October 2014 Higher Walton Church of England (VC) Primary School, Higher Walton, Preston PR5 4FE.