



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **Howick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Liverpool Road  
Penwortham  
Preston  
PR1 0NB

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Blackburn**

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 25 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 13 December 2010

School's unique reference number: 119364

Headteacher: Deborah Bramley

Inspector's name and number: Gail Goodman 571

#### **School context**

Howick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller than average school of 103 pupils, located in a rural setting within extensive grounds. There are three mixed age classes, one discrete reception class and a dependent after school club. This popular school draws its pupils from the local area and the surrounding district. Almost all pupils are white European. The headteacher has been in post for seven years. St Mary's church is situated a ten minute drive away.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Howick Church of England Voluntary Controlled School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- Pupils are valued, nurtured and encouraged to flourish within a distinctive Christian environment, and, as a consequence, behaviour is outstanding.
- The Christian vision and inspiring leadership of the headteacher is wholly shared and supported by staff, governors and the whole school and church community.
- Christian values have a clear impact on learners' personal development and on their academic achievement.
- Links with the parish church are strong and families value the care, support and guidance that the school offers.

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

School places great emphasis on Christian values where staff and children respect each other and are nurtured to reach their full potential. The mission statement states that these values are embedded in the daily life of school so that all learners know they are valued and supported as members of the Howick family. All members of the school community are aware of these values. They can articulate from their own perspective, how they permeate the rich, creative

curriculum and make the outstanding educational provision at this school so exciting. As one parent reported, 'All the teachers know the children well, as a family. We enjoy the fact that Christian principles are being taught in school'. The love, care and security associated with Christian values enable the children to excel in academic achievement and in their own overall development. The impact of this is seen in exceptionally high results in all pupils, who met, or exceeded, their targets at all levels in all subjects in July 2015. Children's behaviour is excellent and they are developing into well-rounded individuals in their care of each other. This is exemplified in the impact of the school's Christian character upon strong relationships between all learners, in older children acting as prefects and pupils' high attendance. Displays are vibrant and colourful in school classrooms, hall and corridors. They clearly depict Bible stories, pupils' achievement and class rules, enhancing and celebrating the learning experience. Children have an excellent understanding of how the values are an expression of the school's ethos. This is evidenced in their school awards, including Activemark, and more recently, Fairtrade school status. This demonstrates pupils' awareness of good health and taking care of the environment, as in their Eco Warriors' after school club. As the headteacher explained, 'We build the wall of learning here in school, brick by brick. Without the cement, the wall would fall – Jesus is our cement'. Religious Education (RE), which includes other major world faiths as well as Christianity, contributes fully to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness (SMSC). Pupils are able to explain how their actions impact upon others, and are able to 'make spiritual responses about what is happening in the world'. One parent explained, 'It is not just the academic side, it's the wider picture of being aware of, and caring for, each other – the morals and values of a good citizen'.

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

At Howick, great value is placed on the distinctively Christian collective worship (CW) that is the heart of the life of the whole school community. Worship is engaging and relevant and is central to the ethos and values of the school. This is something that the children appreciate and understand. For example, Key Stage 1 children explain how prayers in CW help them to understand the importance of respect and compassion, 'Dear God, make sure we are safe with you and have friendship in our hearts'. It is this level of understanding that makes the impact of CW outstanding in that the messages children hear are recognisable in their own lives and experiences. Worship themes, planned over a three year cycle, give the children the opportunity to encounter a wide range of Anglican tradition and practice. They are strongly linked to Bible stories and deliver clear messages about values, such as trust, forgiveness, courage and perseverance. This is borne out by evaluation and questionnaires with children, which are carried out by staff and governors. Children in the worship group, established by pupils to plan, present and evaluate CW, spoke with confidence. They clearly take pride in the many opportunities to lead CW. This was borne out by the headteacher, who commented that the children take this responsibility both seriously and sensitively. References to God the Father, the person of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are relevant to the children. This is witnessed in the lighting of three candles at the beginning of CW signalling both a time for praise and a deepening understanding of the Trinity. Prayer and reflection are given high importance across all aspects of school life. Children regularly write prayers for the prayer box and write other prayers on the prayer tree. These prayers are often read out in CW. One child, in the pupil forum, mentioned she had, 'prayed to God before my dance exam to calm my nerves'. Another child reported in a questionnaire, 'I love it when we say our prayers because we get to have some quiet time and talk to God'. Children respond enthusiastically to CW, bringing back their thoughts on specific values. These notes are placed on the CW interactive board reflecting, for example, upon humility and thankfulness. Local clergy and church members, including the chair of governors, are involved in leading whole school worship and provide much appreciated pastoral support within the school, as evidenced in the excellent relationships with St Mary's Church community. Acts of CW are held in church for key Christian celebrations and are well attended and much valued by all. During a recent Faith Week, members of other faiths visited to speak of their beliefs and culture, including Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. This

deepening of spiritual development was enthusiastically welcomed by all learners. Children responded well, as demonstrated by their clear understanding of belonging to a wider worshipping community. First hand experiences such as these promote respect and a better understanding of other faiths.

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

The explicit Christian vision that is articulated so well by the leadership team, including all staff and governors, is demonstrated to excellent effect by the headteacher. Her Christian commitment and love shine out in every aspect of her leadership. The governors and whole staff team aim to live out the Christian vision daily and ensure there is a clear purpose to the way the school is moving forward as a church school. The impact of Christian values on the lives of all learners is something that parents appreciate, as when they speak of 'the family atmosphere and approachable staff'. They speak highly of the school's pastoral and inclusive care of all pupils which is the result of the staff's commitment to the Christian ethos. Parents feel welcomed and contribute fully to school life so that all learners benefit from their support in fund raising and volunteering in class. All staff have a thorough knowledge of the school's performance, as demonstrated by clear, ongoing training and a close working relationship that focuses on every learner and continued improvement. The governors know the school well and foundation governors demonstrate a strong commitment between the church and school community. The chair of governors, a church warden at St Mary's, explained, 'We are more effective now than we ever were. We provide a well rounded religious education here which is built into the curriculum'. This has been established through ongoing governors' training, close work with the Diocese and an outstanding working relationship with the headteacher and staff. As a result, governors are fulfilling their roles, monitoring and evaluating all areas of the curriculum, thereby ensuring rigour and continued progress. R.E. is well planned and evaluated by the subject leader. She ensures that RE is given its core status within the curriculum and in continually developing the school's Christian vision. This is evidenced in a recent focus on Sacred Spaces, where children were encouraged to 'think about their spiritual journey and seek answers to moral questions'. Partnership with the church family, parents and local and wider communities are flourishing. The curate of St Mary's explains, 'Howick actively demonstrates its Christian ethos. This is how we live - with Christian values, like love and respect, entwined in the name of Jesus'. Howick has worked diligently, and extremely successfully to address issues raised by the previous inspection and puts all learners at the heart of its mission as a church school.

SIAMS report, February 2016, Howick C.E. (V.C.) Primary School, Penwortham, PR1 0NB