



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

### Hebden Royd Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Lane,  
Hebden Bridge,  
West Yorkshire.  
HX7 6DS

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales**

Local authority: Calderdale

Date of inspection: 1 December 2014

Date of last inspection: 20 October 2009

School's unique reference number: 107551

Headteacher: Gretl Young

Inspector's name and number: Lorraine Hanson 769

#### School context

Hebden Royd is a smaller than average primary school with 135 pupils on roll. Nearly all the pupils are from white British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average and none of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average and pupils with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hebden Royd as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher's vision underpins the Christian ethos of the school
- Clear Christian values permeate school life and make a positive impact on children's exemplary behaviour and attitudes
- The strength of relationships at all levels in the school nurtures commitment and inspires children to take responsibility for others
- The good quality personal development and well-being of children
- The links with the parish church and support of governors strengthen the Christian character of the school

#### Areas to improve

- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality and how this can be nurtured
- Provide regular opportunities for children to learn from religious education to improve their interpretation and reflective skills
- Ensure that RE teaching and learning is routinely monitored through lesson observations and evaluated to improve outcomes for children
- Provide regular opportunities for children to plan and lead collective worship

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

Christian values permeate the life of the school and have a marked effect on the exemplary behaviour of the children. Each collective worship theme is based on a Christian value and referred to throughout the half-term in worship and in classes. Posters focus on the current theme and prompt positive behaviour. For example for the theme 'Trust' children are challenged by the question, 'How do I show that I can be trusted?' The school mission statement is displayed in school and on the website. It shows Jesus as an example to follow regarding making choices and facing challenges. Everyone is valued and there are deep, caring relationships at all levels in the school. Children enjoy coming to school and their attendance is high. Older children buddy new starters to school so they settle quickly. A parent commented, 'The school feels like a family'. The curriculum is enriched through visits and visitors, as well as through a wide range of after-school clubs. The gardening club children have created a pebble spiral as a focus of thankful prayers in the outside quiet area, which promotes reflection. Year 3 children are each presented with a Bible by the school, with their name in it. During their time in KS2 children are taught how to use their Bible and become familiar with its teachings. As they leave the school at the end of Year 6 they take their Bible with them. Children understand how many children's lives are more difficult than their own, particularly through the school's sponsorship of a child in Armenia. They are compassionate and have responded to need by initiating and organising fund raising events themselves. The good quality personal development and well-being of children is appreciated by parents. Children's academic needs are now being met, following improvements in progress and outcomes for children in the core subjects of reading, writing and maths, during the last two years. Children have been involved in supporting a wide range of local, national and international charities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through the Christian character of the school, through collective worship and religious education. However a shared understanding amongst staff of spirituality and how this can be nurtured is not well-defined. Opportunities for children's self-initiated personal reflection or prayer are sporadic and there are inconsistencies in the quality of provision for learning from religion to promote the development of skills such as reflection and interpretation. This is an inclusive school where children feel secure and supported. Children understand Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith through, for example, their involvement in fundraising for projects in the link diocese of Mara in Tanzania. Their attention is also drawn to examples of inspirational Christians in other parts of the world, such as by the cross and poster displayed in the hall quoting Bishop Desmond Tutu, 'We are the rainbow people of God'.

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

Collective worship is held every day. This is mainly whole school with weekly opportunities for key stage worship. The headteacher plans the overview of themes for worship, which are relevant and based on Christian texts and values. The themes are followed up in classrooms and children are able to give examples of what Bible stories can teach regarding their own lives. For example a child said, 'King Solomon teaches you that you should tell the truth'. Children enjoy collective worship. The Christian calendar is highlighted through the use of the appropriate liturgical colour. Attention was drawn to this, during the worship observed, as there had been a change of cloth to purple as Advent began. The major Christian festivals are marked through whole school services in the church at Harvest, Christmas and Easter, which are well attended by parents. One parent commented, 'The Easter Service was just amazing, every child was involved in telling each part of the Easter story. It was incredibly powerful, with some adults drawn to tears'. The headteacher, all teachers and the vicar lead worship. However the children do not yet have opportunity to plan and lead worship themselves. Children are given opportunity and are keen to participate. During the whole school worship observed nineteen children came forward to support the headteacher, confidently and ably through an unrehearsed drama, in telling the story of Jesus calming the waves. This was

enjoyable as well as instructive and appreciated by all those present. This Bible story was used to exemplify the theme of 'Trust' to trust in Jesus. All the children were interested and attentive throughout the worship and their behaviour was impeccable. Children are aware of and have some understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They learn about the Trinity in collective worship particularly at Pentecost, through RE lessons and by singing a song about this. Prayer is part of the school day, with grace said before lunch and a prayer said at the end of each day. Children know the Lord's Prayer and enjoy joining in with actions to this and there are collections of prayers in classrooms. Children value prayer, for example one child said, 'We are talking to God when we pray'. However opportunity for children's self-initiated personal reflection and prayer is not readily available during the school day.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Standards of attainment in religious education (RE) for the majority of children in the school are in line with national expectations and broadly in line with standards in other curriculum areas. Children have a good understanding of Christianity and utilise this foundation to compare and contrast what they learn about other world religions. A parent commented, 'Respect for other faiths is nurtured by the school'. One way this is done is through children learning from a parent talking about her Jewish faith, although children have not had recent opportunity to visit places of worship of other faiths. Children have positive attitudes to RE and enjoy lessons. The Christian values are reinforced through RE lessons and some opportunities for developing skills of enquiry, analysis and interpretation are provided, though scrutiny of children's RE work shows inconsistencies of focus on this across the school. In a KSI lesson observed children contributed their thoughtful interpretations and reflections on the subject of 'Hope' writing on paper leaves, to add to an Advent ring. For example one child wrote, 'I hope everyone lives in peace'. In a KS2 lesson observed children demonstrated maturity and understanding in using interpretation skills when discussing the importance of the Christmas story for Christians. Children learn about Christians in other parts of the world and gain insight into Christianity as a world-wide religion. The development point from the previous inspection regarding the implementation of a new RE scheme was fulfilled. However this has now been superseded by a new RE scheme from September this year, which is more up-to-date, includes a more efficient assessment system and supports consistency within the local cluster of schools. RE standards are monitored and evaluated by school leaders by looking at children's work and discussion with children. However regular planned observations of RE lessons are not yet in place.

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

The headteacher's vision underpins the Christian ethos of the school and provides a foundation of respect and care for all in an explicitly Christian context. The governing body is active in the life of the school. There are very strong, positive links with the church. A parent commented, 'It's really apparent how the links with the church frames things in the school'. Before and after-school care is held in the church. The JAM (Jesus and Me) club is held weekly after school and is led by church members. The vicar gives generously of his time and the role he plays in supporting the school's Christian ethos is significant. He leads collective worship weekly, runs a Lent course for Year 6 children, and leads visits to the church to teach about Baptism, vestments and features of the church. Collective worship and RE are informed by distinctive Christian values and contribute to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The development points from the previous inspection have been addressed so now staff and governors formally evaluate the impact of their church school distinctiveness and together with headteacher, deputy and staff are keen to keep moving this school forward as a church school. There are strong links with the local community and the school has positive links with the diocese. Staff and governors benefit from diocesan courses and the school has raised funds for projects in the link diocese of Mara in Tanzania.