



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Adel St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School

Long Causeway

Adel

Leeds

LS16 8EX

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Local authority: Leeds

Date of inspection: 1 December 2015

Date of last inspection: 1 July 2011

School's unique reference number: 108041

Acting headteacher: Jane Hainsworth

Inspector's name and number: Malcolm Price (627)

School context

Adel St John the Baptist is a single-form entry primary school with 204 children on roll, set in attractive, semi-rural surroundings on the northern outskirts of Leeds. The majority of children are from white British backgrounds but there is a significant proportion of children from other backgrounds and representing faiths other than Christianity. The parish church is within walking distance. The acting headteacher has been in this role since Easter 2015, having previously been the deputy headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong Christian character and caring ethos of the school are demonstrated through exemplary relationships and a clear focus on distinctive Christian values
- Collective worship supports this distinctiveness through its relevance to children's lives and spiritual growth
- Religious education (RE) contributes well to children's spiritual development
- The nurturing ethos has a positive impact on progress, and the majority of children achieve in line with or above national averages

Areas to improve

- Seek ways to embed the planning and assessment of RE so that learners are inspired by the subject and can demonstrate their understanding, particularly in regard to what they learn from religion
- Take advantage of the existing creativity in the school to develop and enhance the appearance of the school hall as a worship space

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

Visitors to this welcoming, busy school are left in no doubt that its distinctive Christian character is central to its life and that it places a high priority on children's spiritual development. This character is most evident in the ease and readiness with which children speak of spiritual matters and articulate the school's Christian values. Not only do they claim to 'act like a big family' and that 'there is a lot of friendship' but, more importantly, they say that the school 'teaches us about Christian values'. For instance, they know that the whole school focus is currently on awe and wonder, joy and peace. They clearly understand and explain that the values make a difference to their relationships and their attitudes. Indeed, this is revealed in their excellent behaviour and in their consideration for each other. The distinctive Christian character is demonstrated in many other ways – for example, through prayers at key times of the day and through visits to the local church, which children say 'make us think about how special the world is that God created'. It is reinforced visually through prayer spaces and reflective areas in all classrooms and the main entrance, as well as in displays such as the 'John the Messenger' presentation. Parents are highly supportive of the school and its ethos and speak of the school having a 'sense of belonging'. Lessons are purposeful and children collaborate well and enjoy their learning. In particular, RE lessons contribute significantly to children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school ethos enables all children, including the most vulnerable, to achieve well and make good progress personally and academically.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship provides a focal point for the school day and is clearly enjoyed by both children and adults. It is inclusive and inspirational, in that children are encouraged to relate it to the attitudes they have in their wider lives. For example, children can suggest helpful actions that they could carry out for including in their 'advent calendar for giving'. Links are consistently made to Bible stories and scripture. Children are respectful of collective worship as a special time, listen and participate well, and remember what they have heard. They volunteer enthusiastically to act and the manner of their participation in singing suggests that the words are having a positive impact on their understanding and attitudes. They can explain that a candle is lit to 'help us remember that Jesus is the light of the world'. They use responses and know the Lord's prayer and school prayer by heart. Children are regularly involved in planning and leading class worship and also write prayers for these worship times. For instance, when presenting the theme of generosity, children created a prayer to 'help us understand that we don't have to be rich to be generous'. The local vicar is regularly involved in leading worship in school and children speak of enjoying his contribution. Children also speak positively of their visits to local churches. Collective worship is thoroughly planned in themes that reflect the school values and includes the major Christian festivals and those of other faiths. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of worship is well established and children are asked to reflect on it when they return to class. Parents are encouraged to attend when possible and visitors describe the experience as 'a joyous occasion' and one that 'sets me up for the day'. There is scope for improving the visual appearance of the school hall as a worship space.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Outstanding subject leadership and a proactive approach to staff training have resulted in teachers being confident in lesson material and in their ability to enthuse and challenge children. Some children are impressively knowledgeable about scripture. For example, some know that the story of Gabriel visiting Mary comes from the book of Luke and older children are sometimes able to recite key Bible verses by heart. Children are able to reflect on the response of the shepherds to seeing angels, suggesting that 'they would feel privileged, as not many people in the world would know' about Jesus' birth. They also understand how the elements of an Advent wreath can 'remind us of God' and that 'Jesus is still alive and in our world'. Older children are able to explain the difference between sacred and secular images. Children study a range of faiths and can describe symbolism within Hinduism and Sikhism. They can also explain how it might be disrespectful to draw an image of Mohammed. Teachers question for deeper understanding and, through their marking, encourage children to engage in dialogue. However, some children do not as yet relate their learning in RE to the school's values or to attitudes and behaviour in their own lives. There is every indication that standards in RE are in line with those in other core areas of learning. The very detailed scheme of work is supported by well-considered assessment procedures. The subject leader has provided all teachers with extensive guidance and gathers regular data from them relating to pupil attainment and progress. School leaders are right in their evaluation that there could be a greater emphasis on how children learn from religion.

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

The acting headteacher, school leadership team and governors set an example through their shared commitment to promoting the distinctive Christian character and purpose of the school. All those in leadership articulate this strongly and are fully involved in the strategic development of the school as a community based on Christian values. The distinctive character and vision underpin the school development plan and the values are rooted within the whole curriculum. Staff have attended diocesan training such as the aspiring leaders in church schools programme and worship leading. The partnership between the school and parish church is strong. The vicar has written guidance explaining the Christian values in more detail and relating them to scripture. A copy of this is available for parents in the entrance hall. There is also a successful partnership with a Baptist church, and through this children learn about the diversity of Christian worship and experience. Children are encouraged in their leadership roles and have a voice through the school council. They speak regularly about the success of their racial harmony committee and explain that 'it makes you feel more relaxed about yourself knowing that you will never be bullied'. Leaders encourage children to participate in local events and to support charitable causes, such as Shelter, Children in Need and through their help at a MacMillan coffee morning. They also help children to learn about a range of cultures and faiths through the international week. The school is aware of its role and responsibility in growing and nurturing future leaders of church schools, as shown in recent appointments. The focus areas from the previous SIAMS report have been addressed in that children are involved in planning and leading collective worship and a range of more formal monitoring procedures have been developed, with the progress and attainment of all children being closely monitored. Finally, it is a credit to the school that parents say they 'couldn't find any fault' and 'could not want for a better school'.

SIAMS report December 2015 Adel St John the Baptist C of E Primary School LS16 8EX