



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bedale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Firby Road
Bedale
DL8 2AT

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Dates of inspection: 28 January 2015

Date of last inspection: 11 February 2010

School's unique reference number: 121479

Headteacher: Liz Turnbull

Inspector's name and number: Geraldine Cooper 696

School context

The school is larger than average with 331 pupils on roll. The school serves the town of Bedale and the surrounding rural area. The majority of pupils are white British with a small but gradually increasing number of pupils from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is below national average. The school is an enhanced mainstream school making provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has experienced an unsettled period of leadership since the last inspection. A new head-teacher and senior leadership team are now established.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bedale Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The strong impact of collective worship on pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and teachings.
- The centrality of a Christian ethos to a nurturing environment which enables pupils to be confident, articulate and to achieve.
- The shared vision of a head-teacher who has a sound understanding of, and commitment to, the ethos of the school as a church school.
- The positive relationships between the school, the church and the immediate and wider community.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the values of the school are explicitly Christian.
- Develop opportunities for pupils' to communicate their sense of the spiritual throughout the curriculum.

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

The school's Christian ethos is simply stated through the acrostic Bedale; believe in Jesus, enjoy, develop, achieve, love, empathise – which children find easy to remember. Displays are used extremely effectively to promote and explain them in a Christian context. Children have developed an understanding of these as Christian values which they are proud to live by. All members of the school community describe how positively the Christian ethos of the school impacts on behaviour and learning. Pupils are confident and articulate, they describe effectively the links between Bible stories Christian values and learning, "It's good to try and Ok to fail ... like Peter couldn't walk on water". Following a period of instability the newly appointed head-teacher has re-enforced the school's Christian ethos. Parents, rightly, consider that the school's caring Christian environment enables pupils to flourish and achievement is in line with, or above, national averages. The close relationship between the school and the Anglican and Methodist churches ensures that pupils have an understanding of diversity within Christianity. Religious education is well resourced and is central to the curriculum. An effective subject leader monitors and evaluates progress and encourages creativity in RE. Pupils' spiritual development is evidenced through the reflective thinking evidenced in 'big books' and the confident way in which they can talk about God. This would be enhanced by more references to spirituality across the curriculum. The 'read to feed' project, alongside a wide range of extra-curricular and charitable activities, has helped pupils to understand global diversity. This has been further enhanced by their detailed study of Islam and Hinduism in RE.

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

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. The Vicar, Methodist Minister, staff and pupils, work closely together to plan worship themes which the children find inspirational. In response to pupil evaluations there is a very strong emphasis on Biblical teaching which effectively links old and new testament themes to create sound theological understanding. Pupils talked confidently about the Passover story in the old testament and make links to the Gospel account of the last supper and the celebration of the Eucharist today. Pupils have a very strong understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus and are eager to talk about how these explain the school's Christian values. Vertically age grouped 'House' worship enables pupils to meet in smaller groups where there are further opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship. Daily candle-time has enhanced pupils' understanding of personal prayer and reflection and encourages pupils to discuss and reflect prayerfully on their responses to contemporary issues. The very close links between church and school have proved mutually beneficial. Pupils regularly celebrate religious festivals in Church and have led Sunday worship. The incumbent plays a key role in providing pastoral support for staff and parents.

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

The school has endured many changes of leadership since the last inspection. The newly appointed head-teacher has a deep understanding of the needs of the school and the wider community. She is supported by a dedicated senior leadership team and governing body who share her zeal and commitment to a school ethos which promotes the centrality of Jesus in a child friendly and inclusive manner. The school has taken advantage of a range of diocesan training. A collegiate approach to decision making and close co-operation with neighbouring church schools ensures that all staff have the opportunity to develop good practice. Parents are appreciative of the way that the school's values provide pupils with a 'moral compass' which has led to a significant improvement in behaviour. The foundation governors are proactive in the evaluation of the impact of the school's denominational status and offer constructive critical support.

