



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Hertford Vale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ings Lane
Staxton
Scarborough
YO12 4SS

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: York

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Date of inspection: 15 June 2016

Date of last inspection: July 2011

School's unique reference number: 121534

Headteacher: Andrew Barber

Inspector's name and number: Doug Masterton 483

School context

Hertford Vale Church of England Primary School serves the village of Staxton and surrounding villages, in a rural district some eight miles south of Scarborough. The 126 children on roll are predominantly White British. A lower than average proportion of children are eligible for free school meals but a higher than average percentage have recognised additional learning needs. There is some significant level of mobility linked to social and family issues which reached 12% in a recent year. The present headteacher took up his post in September 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hertford Vale Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Koinonia, thankfulness, compassion and friendship are the Christian values that have sustained the excellence of provision at Hertford Vale and they inspire a vibrant, caring, happy and highly effective school community.
- Collective worship is joyous and intellectually challenging, leading to reflection and understanding. It makes a substantial contribution to children's personal and spiritual development.
- Shared purpose, dedication to a school shaped by Christian values and a joy of working with children characterise the high quality of staff leadership and governors' strength of commitment to excellence through distinctiveness as a church-school.

Areas to improve

- Explore ways in which children can have more experience to meet and work with their peers from other faith and ethnic communities.
- Secure greater resilience for review and evaluation of school effectiveness as a church school through involvement of all members of the governing body.

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

The Christian dimension is carefully woven through every aspect of educational provision at Hertford Vale. It is unmistakably effective in nurturing children's academic and spiritual development. Attainment of children on entry is lower than average. All children make good progress during their time in school, even if they are not there for the full number of years. Standards reached by children leaving school are above average. Faith-inspired commitment to the wellbeing and development of every child means that learning and emotional needs are all recognised. Parents speak enthusiastically of the way that their children learn and the personal qualities that the school nurtures. At this school, children become curious, thoughtful, confident to express their points of view, caring, well behaved, mutually supportive and very conscious and respectful of the Christian values that underpin every aspect of life in school. They are keen to learn and to make a full contribution to the work of the school particularly through collective worship. Children help to respond to the needs of each other and to needs outside the school. Their conduct, inclusive friendships and caring demeanour stems directly from the school ethos. There is rich provision (including a wide range of extra-curricular activities), many planned occasions for reflection and inspirational example from the staff who work with them. Evidence of their enthusiastic and thoughtful response is seen everywhere in the prayers they have written and shared. It is also evident in the work they have displayed and their relationships with each other and those who teach them. Children respond sensitively and maturely to the trust that is placed in them. They live up to the expectation that they should care for each other and to the encouragement they are given to explore their own ideas. Through the curriculum, children learn much concerning other faiths and cultures. However, the rural isolation of the school means they have restricted opportunity for direct contact with their peers of other faiths and ethnicities and this limits their awareness of other cultures and worship traditions. Religious education (RE) is a key aspect of their experience. This high-profile subject is closely linked to the programme for collective worship. It powerfully informs the intellectual basis of children's lively curiosity and well-developed understanding of the Christianity that inspires their school.

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

Collective worship is the focal point of school life each day, taking place in classes, sections of the school or with the whole community meeting together. The village church is also used regularly. Occasions are joyous celebrations of the faith underpinning the school using symbols, such as a cross and lighted candles, aspects of Anglican liturgy, prayer, music and enthusiastic singing. Acts of collective worship also include substantial planned content, teaching key ideas and involving learning activities that help develop children's understanding of the basis of Christianity and how this faith can inspire. For example, older children are asked to consider and discuss why people go to church. Younger children use drama to relate to the stories of famous and brave people who have been motivated by their faith. Detailed planning for a whole year secures balance, ensures that the programme reflects the church calendar and includes substantial content from Bible stories. It provides a structure into which class teachers, the parish priest and other visitors can add their valued and varied contributions. Children have taken over a substantial role in school collective worship, regularly presenting themes, writing and leading prayer. There is a widespread and natural culture of prayer in school. Children write, post and display their prayers freely. The act of expressing concern and hope for others through prayer is seen as appropriate and worthwhile, even by those who do not relate the process to faith. Collective worship is a joyous experience bringing the community together. However, the limited space in both school and the church restricts the level of community participation. Anglican doctrine, including that of the Trinity is well represented within the programme and incorporated within prayer. Together, collective worship and RE raise children's awareness. As they become older, this develops their confidence to discuss and unpick difficult questions to a remarkable degree. Children are encouraged to think and debate. They are keen to understand and they discuss animatedly ideas such as those surrounding the mystery of creation, the historical veracity of the Easter story and the nature of Jesus' parentage. Additional evidence of the impact of collective worship is seen throughout the school with many displays and souvenirs of the memorable occasions the school has celebrated. It is also reflected in school and governors' evaluations.

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

The school values of koinonia (fellowship), thankfulness, compassion and friendship are widely understood and deeply embedded in all aspects of school life and planning. They were chosen in response to the previous inspection, following which school leaders undertook a thorough consultation with all stakeholders. These core Christian values are used to underpin all aspects of school provision, for both academic and personal development. Displays of many and varied school activities reflecting these values are a significant feature within all areas of the school. They are indicative of the way that these values not only inform policy and provision but permeate every aspect of the education that children experience. Children know what these values are and what they mean, including koinonia. The headteacher has securely shaped a shared commitment and purpose throughout the school community. He has ensured school values inform all planning, and introduced a demanding programme of training and development for church-school responsibility and leadership for both staff and governors. School review is secure and self-evaluation is accurate. It correctly assesses both the character and quality of provision together with the most important areas for improvement. Governors have skilfully steered the school through changes in leadership and staffing, sustaining excellence. They have made sure that its Christian foundation continually inspires and safeguards the quality of provision. Governors realise that further work is needed to articulate the aims and vision of the school, but not all members are yet involved in review and evaluation of the school *as a church school*. Working together with the local church, the school is a beacon for the witness of the contribution that Christianity makes to the community of villages that it serves. The school uses the network of church and community schools throughout the wider local district for staff and governor development. It takes up many opportunities offered by the diocese and York Minster to enrich children's experience and understanding of Christianity and its mission. The well-resourced and managed arrangements for the leadership of collective worship and the management of RE ensures that they meet statutory requirements.

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