



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Over St. John's Church of England Primary School

Delamere Street, Winsford  
CW7 2LU

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Cheshire West and Chester

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Date of last inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010

School's unique reference number: 111263

Headteacher Emma Harrison

Inspector's name and number: Christine J Buckley 525

#### School context

Over St. John's Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average sized primary school. Children's skills on entry are below expectations for their age but when children leave at the end of year 6 the attainment is in line with the national average. The proportion of children receiving the pupil premium is in line with the national average. Children eligible for the pupil premium are those eligible for free school meals or those looked after by the local authority. The number of children receiving support at school action, or school action plus or having a statement of special educational needs is below average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Over St John's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- A tangible Christian ethos, with exemplary relationships, enables children to be nurtured and supported in the whole of their development.
- The well-established strong links between the church and school are mutually beneficial and make a significant contribution to the spiritual development of the children.
- Effective leadership of staff and governors has strengthened the Christian distinctiveness and made it explicit to the wider community.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop systems of evaluation for collective worship (CW) so that all stakeholders can contribute to further improvements.
- Enable the children to make the connection between biblical teaching and the school's values to better understand how they are distinctively Christian.
- Ensure that the self-evaluation process is embedded in the calendar so that all stakeholders are able to take part.

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

Over St. John's Church of England Primary School has a distinctive Christian character that is not only evident in the beautiful environment but also in the ethos of the school. Since the last inspection there has been a focus on Christian values which was an area for improvement. Children talk about these and how they affect the choices they make both at school and home. However, there is a need for greater understanding of their biblical roots. The school has displays and areas that promote the Christian message and provide the school community with opportunities to reflect and spend a moment in quiet prayer both in the classroom and the school hall. A new prayer board has been installed that also displays the liturgical colours of the season and close to this are pebbles that may be used as an aid to prayer. Some children said that they liked these as they can remain anonymous and do not need to write. Some of the written prayers included prayers of thanks, asking for forgiveness and praying for our soldiers, demonstrating that children use prayer in many different situations. In the classrooms the children have a book of reflection where they are encouraged to respond to the weekly theme of collective worship. These opportunities encourage spiritual development. Staff also find inspiration for their own spirituality and enjoy sharing reflections on the themes of collective worship with the children. RE makes a significant contribution to the understanding of faith where during lessons children not only demonstrate biblical knowledge but experience faith through music. It is taught creatively and children are fully engaged with the learning relating biblical principles to their own lives. The school mission statement has been recently revised, with contributions from children in Year 5, in order to promote a greater Christian distinctiveness. Two new logos, one designed by a parent and one designed by a child, symbolise the mission statement and focus of Christian values and formed the basis of a leaflet sent to parents to make explicit the Christian foundation of the school. Exemplary relationships within the school are characterised by respect, acceptance and forgiveness. Children have an understanding of different world faiths and understand the need for respect and tolerance. Their understanding that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith is less developed. Children were able to express their understanding of the need to forgive based on the teaching of Jesus. This leads to an acceptance and respect for everyone. The children are very keen to help others in need and raise money for a variety of local and global causes including Shine Africa. Christian values encourage the children to persevere and all children make good or better progress. Average attainment at the end of year 6 is at or slightly above the national level. This is achieved through the individual tracking of children and appropriate systems of interventions. The curriculum of the school is enhanced by extra-curricular activities such as sports opportunities at the Church of England High School, residential visits and the North West Young Voices. The Christian character of the school is seen in the way that the whole child is very well cared for.

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

Collective worship was an element of a research project undertaken by some Year 5 pupils and was action noted for improvement in the last inspection. This led to the formation of a Worship Group made up of some children and a member of staff. They now plan the themes for each week. Worship is an important valued element of each day as affirmed by the children in a recent survey. One child said that if something is bothering him or he is angry when he comes to school, he feels peaceful and ready to start the day after worship. Most children engage with collective worship and value the opportunity to 'talk with God', 'feel loved', 'have time to think' and 'feel special'. Each class takes an object from their reflection area into collective worship and this provides a focal point for worship and gives continuity between what happens in worship and in the classroom. A variety of staff, the vicar and occasionally children lead worship. Biblical content varies and more detailed planning would ensure that this is a regular feature of each day. Understanding and experience of Anglican traditions (an area of improvement from the last inspection) has been developed through the

introduction of some liturgy in worship and through a half termly service in church where the vicar uses the order of service for an all age service. The school and church community celebrate the major Christian festivals and the children articulate the meaning of these festivals for themselves and others. A junior child said 'Easter is a very important time because Jesus died for us'. The children demonstrated an understanding of God the Father, Jesus the Son and God the Holy Spirit and this term the vicar is focusing on this concept using stories from John's gospel. Children volunteer to take part in extemporary prayer and even the youngest children show an understanding and ability to pray. They talked about prayers to say thank you to God and to pray for others so that 'they know we are their friends'. During an act of collective worship children demonstrated the ability to reflect theologically on the meaning of songs and apply this to their lives. There are additional opportunities to pray or reflect on a biblical theme during the day. Some children say that prayer is a regular part of their lives both at home and school even if it is not the habit of their family. When some older children talked about their prayer life they expressed their intention to continue to pray even if this is not the norm in their secondary school. Another child said that because he has benefited from a church primary school, he has chosen to go to a church high school. These comments indicate a lasting effect on the lives of the children. Although improvements have been made there is no regular evaluation by all stakeholders therefore this is an area for improvement.

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

Effective Christian leadership from staff and governors promotes this school as a Christian school. Since the last inspection the Christian foundation has been made more explicit in wall murals and published literature and a new mission statement and logo promoted. Founded upon Christian teaching that every child is special and has God-given potential, the leadership is committed to ensuring that all children achieve their best in every aspect of their lives. This is evidenced by monitoring attainment and progress and supporting children using pupil premium money with intervention strategies. Communication between the church and school is effective and facilitated by children and adults and there is a sense of belonging to both. The vicar spends time in school each week and gives regular spiritual input, for example, in collective worship and provides support in difficult pastoral situations. Through this he promotes the Christian character of the school and makes invaluable contributions to spiritual development. Staff expertise for RE and collective worship is enhanced through professional development. The headteacher and vicar have attended Diocesan courses together and some of the governors have also attended training showing a commitment to leadership of a church school. Appropriate action has been taken to develop the school's work in areas highlighted by the last inspection. Church school self-evaluation has led to improvements in Christian distinctiveness. However, this process needs to be formalised and include all stakeholders. Staff in the school model Christian values and affirm children in their Christian conduct. An example of this is the use of the ARK awards (acts of random kindness) where any member of the school community can nominate another for an award that demonstrates that they have lived out a Christian value. One example is a child nominated for patting another child when they had a coughing fit.

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