



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Upton Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Upton Lane,
Upton-by-Chester,
Chester,
Cheshire,
CH2 1ED

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire West and Chester

Date of inspection: 23 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 6 July 2011

School's unique reference number: 131684

Headteacher: Paula Moreton

Inspector's name and number: Anne B. Woodcock 445

School context

Upton Heath is a large primary school serving the community of Upton, near Chester. The majority of the 401 pupils are of White British heritage and they come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to attract the pupil premium grant, although lower than average, is increasing. About 18% of pupils are from service families based at the nearby Dale Barracks. A number of pupils who enter and leave the school at different times is higher than average. The school supports an above average proportion of pupils with additional needs. The school benefits from extensive grounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Upton Heath as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by dedicated staff and governors, have secured the school's distinctive Christian character. This has impacted strongly on all aspects of school improvement.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour, positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning reflect the school's Christian vision and their understanding of love, friendship and respect.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual growth is extremely good. As a result, their spiritual and personal development is outstanding.

Areas to improve

- Provide regular opportunities for children to plan and lead collective worship so that they can demonstrate their understanding of the nature and purpose of worship.
- Engage parents more fully in the church school self-evaluation process so that they can contribute more fully to the school's Christian vision.

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

The school's distinctive Christian character is immediately apparent to visitors. It can be seen in the vibrant, reflective displays of pupil work and sensed in the calm, purposeful working atmosphere created throughout the school. Pupils, staff and parents confidently explain the way in which established Christian values impact on all relationships. One Year 6 pupil stated, 'We learn to be independent and make good choices. We are all treated in the same way, so we all feel good about ourselves.' All children are extremely well-supported. Their emotional well-being is prioritised and supported, enabling all to make a positive contribution. Children are eager, articulate and confident learners. They are inspired and challenged by creative, cross-curricular learning. As a result, attendance is very high. All pupils make good, sometimes rapid progress from their starting points. Standards are predominately above national levels. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. 'Jesus taught us about Christian values like friendship and respect and we try hard to follow his example,' explained a Year 5 child. Provision for pupils' spiritual and personal development is extremely good. Reflection is built in to all learning. As a result, children are thoughtful, creative learners, able to express their ideas imaginatively through prose and the arts. They are excited by regular forest school activities through which they learn to apply key skills, collaborate and experience the wonder of nature. Children develop a very good idea of their place in God's world. One Year 6 pupil explained why they support charities. 'Jesus came to serve and we serve by helping those less fortunate than us.' Children have a growing understanding of diversity. Through their work in religious education (RE), pupils explore different cultures and beliefs. They are challenged and inspired by their lessons. One Year 6 pupil stated, 'RE helps you to be a better person because you think about important questions in life.' RE therefore makes a very significant contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. 'We learn about and respect different beliefs and cultures and know that people worship God in lots of ways in different places,' explained a Year 4 pupil.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is appreciated and valued by the majority of children. 'It is a time to be together and think about God,' said a Year 3 pupil. Themes explore Christian values and festivals and are firmly based on Bible teaching. As a result, children gain a good knowledge of Bible stories and the life of Jesus. Some school council members explained, 'Jesus used stories like the Unforgiving Servant and the Lost Sheep to teach us about forgiveness and what God is like.' They describe God as being the creator of the world who loves and cares for everyone. A Year 2 pupil wrote, 'Jesus is God's son. He was brave and he told people not to be afraid.' Some older children talk about their understanding of the Trinity, explaining that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples to help them do God's work. Worship themes are regularly revisited in RE and other subjects. This provides children with time to further reflect and consider their personal responses. The impact of this can be seen in worship reflection books. Worship is led by staff, governors and visitors from local churches. This provides experience of different styles of Christian worship. Children particularly enjoy the weekly 'Open the Book' worship led by members of the Baptist church because they help to act out Bible stories. They are actively engaged in worship, responding willingly to questions and sometimes helping to read or say prayers. However, at present pupils have limited opportunities to regularly plan and lead collective worship, so they are not able to fully demonstrate their understanding of the nature of Christian worship. Prayer is a key feature of worship. Children know the Lord's prayer and graces. They write their own prayers for use in the classroom. Worship is effectively monitored and evaluated by governors who visit regularly and meet with staff and pupils. Feedback continues to inform future planning and lead to ongoing improvements. For example, discussions with pupils identified the need to develop their understanding of the Trinity. Links with the church have been maintained whilst awaiting the appointment of a new vicar.

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

school is good

'Our Christian values run like a golden thread through everything we do,' stated a governor. As a result, all aspects of school improvement are founded on the shared vision 'excellence, enjoyment, reflection, respect'. The headteacher and deputy headteacher inspire and drive ongoing improvement which has resulted in raised standards and a sharp focus on church school distinctiveness. Respectful, inclusive relationships nurture and support pupils and their families and break down barriers to learning. Governors challenge and support the work of the school effectively. They have established an annual church school review process which involves staff and pupils. Foundation governors observe RE and collective worship. They meet with staff and pupils and feedback is used to inform decision-making. However, the school recognises that parents need to be more fully engaged in the church school evaluation process. Church school issues are prioritised within school improvement planning. Governors have ensured that the issues for development from the last inspection have been addressed. The impact of changes has been evaluated, leading to raised standards and ongoing improvements. Governors and senior leaders ensure that the needs of all pupils are met through the effective use of additional funding. The provision of a learning mentor to support vulnerable pupils and their families is an example of this. Governors have secured effective, passionate leadership for RE and collective worship. Provision for both areas meets statutory requirements. Both are well-supported and resourced and they make a very significant contribution to the school's Christian character. The partnership with the diocese has been instrumental in addressing issues of governance and staff training. This has led to significant and rapid improvements which have impacted strongly on strategic planning and development. As a result, governors and leaders are confident in their ability to maintain a strong focus on meeting the needs of all learners.

SIAMS report June 2016 Upton Heath CE Primary School, Upton-by-Chester, Chester CH2 1ED