



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Darrington Church of England Primary School (academy status)

Denby Crest
Darrington
Pontefract
WF8 3SB

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 19 January 2016

Date of last inspection: October 2010 (as a CofE VC Primary School)

School's unique reference number: 140110

Headteacher: Lyndsay Ranby

Interim headteacher: Lorna Kemplay

Inspector's name and number: Nigel Castledine (652)

School context

Darrington CofE Primary converted to its current academy status in September 2013. Prior to this, it was a Voluntary Controlled CofE school. Mainly serving the local predominantly White British community, the school is much smaller than average. The majority of the children at the school come from families of the Christian faith. The number of disadvantaged children is around the national average as is the number of pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Because the headteacher is currently on maternity leave, the school has had an interim headteacher in post since the autumn term 2015.

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

- The affirming, positive influence of the three chosen core gospel values underpins every aspect of the life of the school and strengthens its pervasive Christian ethos
- Highly effective leadership ensures that the school's Christian distinctiveness continues to support the highest possible educational outcomes for every child
- The thoughtful nurture, care and support given to every child strongly reflects the Christian belief that every pupil is to be valued as unique and loved by God

Areas to improve

- Increase pupils' existing active involvement in school worship to include occasions when the children are given the independence to plan, deliver and evaluate all its aspects
- Extend the children's understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit by its wider inclusion within the liturgy and content of collective worship

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

Christian belief is at the heart of all that takes place in this school. Biblical teaching is the source of the three pervasive core gospel values which influence all that takes place within the life of the school. All members of the school community know these values: friendship, peace and respect, and understand the gospel teaching that underpins them. Parents spoke of their realisation that these Christian values were also providing their children with a positive influence within the home setting and community. A clear indication of the impact of the chosen values is seen in outstandingly good, thoughtful behaviour in school, and the mutual trust, care and respect for all shown by both adults and children. This supports all pupils in having a sense of self-worth, and aspiring to fulfil their dreams and ambitions. The school's behaviour and discipline policy emphasises the Christian principle of forgiveness. Its framework focuses on positive outcomes and swift intervention. It gives a fresh start to all children each day, and explains the need for all to abide by the policy. The children's enjoyment of their school life is evidenced in the levels of attendance which meet national expectations. Both the school's internal data and Ofsted monitoring indicate that all pupils including those with special educational needs achieve at least good academic progress. Many pupils' attainment is above average by Year 6. The school ensures that the chosen Christian values are regularly refreshed and enriched. This is done through a half-termly focus on a chosen individual gospel value which is highlighted in collective worship and religious education (RE) as well as other appropriate curriculum areas. All classrooms have carefully laid-out, attractive reflection areas which offer pupils a place to think and pray if they wish. The provision assists children in coming to an understanding of themselves as unique individuals. It also encourages them to reflect on the big questions of life such as 'Why did God create the world?'. Faith displays and artefacts around the school extend the children's thinking and pose stimulating questions on matters of belief. All children are supported to develop empathy and to value others in both a cultural and religious sense. This is clearly seen in each Friday's collective worship as a celebration of pupils' talents, gifts and achievement. This includes awards for children whose adoption of core gospel values has been exemplary. Care and thought for others is seen in pupil focus weeks which have covered areas such as internet safety and homophobic bullying. Christian values can also be evidenced in the many ways in which pupils are willing to help others in school. The School Council, ably supported by a school governor, has recently been working hard to improve the range of activities available at playtimes. These children are also involved in the on-going design and creation of a new peace garden in the school grounds. The school community, guided by its gospel values, celebrates cultural diversity. This includes a welcome and respect for all and an appreciation of the variety and richness of differing cultural traditions and beliefs. There are strong links between the school and the wider community, with the children held in high regard for their involvement. The children's understanding of Christianity as a global faith is supported by the school's link to Buhemba Primary School in Tanzania, which has been established through the diocesan link with Mara. Both schools have a strong Christian ethos, and have shared gifts and news as well as learning from each other's cultures. Concern and thought for others is also evidenced by the school's thoughtful and generous giving. Recent donations have gone to National Children's Society, Children in Need and the Pontefract Food Bank.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The collective worship at the school is of an outstandingly high quality, and is therefore able to strengthen and enrich the school's Christian character. Much care and attention is given to the content and styles of worship which include Biblical teaching, music, symbolism, silence and celebration. Whilst Christian in content, it is inclusive because it is skilfully planned to engage positively with those of other world faiths as well as those of no particular faith. The pupils who make up the Darrington Collective Worship Committee meet regularly under the guidance of the vice-chair of governors to review and plan worship. They also build links between worship in school and in the local parish church. The children are also responsible for the setting up of the school hall for daily worship. Anglican tradition is observed in the use of liturgical colours

for the worship table which is also provided with a Christian cross and a special candle. Its three flames burn during worship to signify the presence of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This links to the concept of the Holy Trinity, but the children's understanding of this Christian belief is limited. Worship is planned to reflect the liturgical seasons and festivals of the Christian calendar but also references the special days and beliefs of other major world faiths. It also focuses on the pupils' learning in RE, the current chosen Christian value and social and emotional aspects of learning. School worship also takes place in the local church at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Such services are very well attended by parents and families, who speak positively of the special atmosphere of praise and worship. Children describe how they choose to engage in prayer and reflection as part of their school lives and are happy to share their prayers in collective worship. Parents describe how this spirituality is also taken into the home where some pupils have encouraged family prayers. Worship is led by the school staff, clergy and governors, as well as invited guests such as Hand to Mouth and the Salvation Army. As a positive outcome from the last inspection, pupils also take responsibility for aspects of worship planning, delivery and evaluation. Each half-term's worship plans are shared in advance with the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Because of the high quality and rich content of RE teaching, the children are energised and motivated by their learning in this subject. RE is ably led by the headteacher and is well resourced. Skilled class teachers are able to deliver an exciting mix of learning activities that inspire children to learn about as well as from religion. This provision enables children to be well informed and to consider their own reactions to and thinking about faith. Outcomes from RE learning are very varied. As well as written work, the children are engaged in cross-curricular learning through art, music, drama, history, geography, science and Godly play. School RE attainment data shows that almost all pupils are working at or above age-related expectations, which is closely in line with other core subjects. The school recognises the importance of appropriate teaching about other major world faiths as well as Christianity. Accordingly, the children are helped to understand the beliefs and customs of a range of faiths including those found within the local area. This good practice is enriched where possible by educational visits to places of worship of contrasting faiths. The school uses the Wakefield Agreed RE syllabus as the basis for its RE provision, and leaders have attended and passed on appropriate training in the subject, with support from the Diocese.

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

Strong, sustained and effective leadership from headteachers and governors ensures that the Christian ethos of the school is at the heart of school life and the pupils' academic success. A development point from the last inspection, now in place, is the governors' effective methodology for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the distinctive Christian nature of the school. Ofsted commented favourably on this area in 2015. On-going, thorough school development planning interlinks the school's Christian ethos with its academic development and underlines their connectivity in every area of school life. Staff development is seen as a priority and is geared to the professional needs of individuals. Good use is made of links with the Pontefract Educational Trust and other local Church of England schools. The diocese has been involved in the development of the school's Christian ethos and has promoted the quality of its RE provision which is now accessed by other schools seeking guidance on best practice. Relationships with the community and the local church are warm and mutually productive. Parents and carers are welcomed into the life of the school. Many varied events are provided which enable families to assist their child's learning as well as using their expertise to enrich the curriculum. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.