



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Royston St. John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Vicarage Lane
Royston, Barnsley.
S71 4QY

Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Barnsley

Dates of inspection: 12th February 2014

Date of last inspection: 2nd December 2008

School's unique reference number: 106636

Headteacher: Mrs. Jill Ryan

Inspector's name and number: Sheila Hornby-Mould Inspector Number 645

School context

Royston St. John the Baptist school currently has 242 pupils on roll. Adjacent to the parish church, it serves a mixed socio-economic area with some significant deprivation. Pupils are overwhelmingly of white British origin. This is a one form entry school with no nursery provision, pupils entering at Foundation Stage 2 in the autumn term. On entry to the school pupils are performing below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Royston St. John the Baptist as a Church of England school are good.

- Explicit Christian values underpin all aspects of the life of this school ensuring that strong relationships and mutual respect characterise the distinctive and effective provision for all children.
- Dedicated leaders and staff willingly embrace new ideas, systems and procedures in order to raise standards.
- Excellent relationships among pupils who understand and demonstrate the Christian values which the school actively promotes.
- Strong relationships with the local church and clergy.

Areas to improve

- The impact of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness in direct relation to the criteria in the Evaluation Schedule, leading to meaningful and measurable evaluations.
- Establish meaningful links with Christian churches of other denominations in the wider community in order that pupils can understand more fully the diversity of the Christian faith.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to fully lead acts of worship. Within this process, establish a formalised, pupil-friendly system of regular evaluation of collective worship to include the opinions of pupils, staff and foundation governors.

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

The school's distinctive Christian character is evident in all aspects of school life. There are strong relationships with the local church. Worship and Religious Education are given high priority. The learning environment is a happy one, in which all children, regardless of need, thrive, achieve well and learn to become good citizens. Parents appreciate the impact that the teaching of Christian values has upon the quality of family relationships. This is particularly evident in the way pupils respect and care for one another, and are highly motivated to help the poor and disadvantaged in the wider community. Golden rules are displayed in all areas of the school, and almost every pupil knows and understands the Christian foundation of these rules and their significance for the development of each individual as a complete human being, leading to such a deep regard for the welfare of others. There is an overarching atmosphere of trust and genuine concern for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of all stakeholders, one in which adults and pupils can encourage others or seek support in a place of safety. The staff know their pupils well; they understand and take account of their background, health and emotional issues so that pupils can have equal access to all aspects of the school's provision and flourish under this high level of care. Pupils articulate that staff do all they can to help them do well. Learners are happy, confident and secure; they enjoy school and say they feel safe. Every individual feels valued. Some parents commented that their children even want to come back to school during holidays. Parents say they appreciate the strong moral teaching that their children receive at this school, with one parent commenting that the school had produced a 'diplomat' in their son, who had acquired such high level skills in helping others resolve their differences. The chair of governors and senior leaders use every opportunity to take advantage of Diocesan training, particularly in relation to the reviewing of the school's Christian character. This training has been used to inform their evaluation of the quality of the school's Christian character on a regular basis. However, more rigorous evaluation, based on the criteria in the National Society's self evaluation material, would enable leaders to develop more effective plans of action, leading to measurable progress and outcomes. Learning about Christianity and other religions in the wider community equips pupils with a greater understanding of the diversity of the human race and teaches them to accept differences in other. One Year 6 pupil commented, 'Learning about Jesus helps us to become better citizens, helpful, helpful with money, being truthful and kind. We learn how to look after one another.' At present there is limited understanding of the multi-cultural aspects of the Christian faith, which is acknowledged by the school as an area for development.

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

Collective worship is recognised as a central feature of the daily life of the school. Pupils acknowledge the time of worship as being an opportunity to be still in God's presence and as one child commented, 'We can learn to live the life that God would like us to live, caring for other people, and learn things that we don't know already'. Pupils engage in diverse aspects of daily worship, often reading prayers they have written themselves or delivering Bible readings. They respond thoughtfully to questions or challenges from worship leaders. They acknowledge the importance of prayer in a believer's life, and enjoy writing their own prayers for a range of circumstances or needs. Understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is developing. As yet, learners do not have regular opportunities to fully lead or to be regularly involved in evaluation of acts of worship which would help to identify where improvement is needed and would inform future planning. The children sing with great enthusiasm, and are keen and confident to share their ideas with the rest of the school community. They have a sound understanding that many of the principles or values that are taught through worship find their origin in the Bible. This is supported by scriptural quotes displayed in the hall, and the Golden Rules prominently displayed all around the school. Learners articulate clearly how these values are relevant to their own and their families' lives. Learners experience a range of Anglican traditions through acts of worship held in the school and in the local church, a church which is also well-used as an effective resource for different curriculum areas by the school. Worship is

planned around the church calendar, supported by a range of relevant themes. In an act of worship observed, pupils were quick to explain their understanding of the words of Jesus in Matthew Chapter 5, where he describes Christians as being 'the salt of the earth'. Learners articulate how they can make a difference, make things better, make the world a better place, protect and preserve our precious world.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Joint leadership of Religious Education (RE) brings a distinct extra dimension to the planning, preparation, delivery and evaluation of effective teaching. Leaders demonstrate sound subject knowledge and a high level of CPD provision cascades effectively to staff who are becoming more confident and secure in their teaching. The Barnsley Syllabus for RE forms the basis of RE planning and is used creatively to make the subject vibrant and engaging. Pupils are encouraged from an early age to acquire and develop a wide range of skills which enhance their learning, including personal enquiry, analysis and interpretation. In lessons observed, pupils were working collaboratively, undertaking independent research, (extremely well scaffolded by the teacher), taking turns, voicing individual opinions with regard to others' viewpoints and making hierarchical decisions. The recently introduced system of combined teacher/pupil evaluation is quickly becoming embedded within the subject. Pupils' self-evaluation, monitored by staff, allows learners to accurately pinpoint what they are doing well, and what requires attention to secure the desired progress and achievement. The system of evaluation and assessment, although in its early stages, is beginning to identify strengths and weaknesses more accurately, enabling appropriate adaptation of planning to raise standards. Learners understand the value of what they learn in RE and appreciate the significance this has on developing their personal lives and character. The teaching of RE makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners, and is an effective means of imparting the school's Christian values to all.

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

The school benefits greatly from the support and challenge of a dedicated governing body which also acts as motivator and critical friend. Governors regularly reflect upon the distinctive Christian character of the school. However, more rigour is required in identifying areas of strength and areas which can be improved. They know their school very well and respond quickly to perceived areas of need. The rapidity and rigour of implementation of the Improvement Strategy Group's action plans to address issues raised in the recent Ofsted inspection are impressive. The dedicated head teacher and staff are fully committed to improving standards in teaching and learning, giving their considered but wholehearted support to any measures which will secure the necessary improvements in all areas. School leaders and managers articulate and promote a clear Christian vision for the school based on strong Christian values. They recognise the impact these have upon learners and the whole life of the school. Leaders have a good understanding of school performance overall, and are developing more rigorous assessment and evaluation strategies to improve performance across the whole curriculum. The leadership team ensure that worship and the teaching of RE are underpinned by the distinctive Christian values which contribute to good behaviour and caring attitudes among staff and pupils alike. Developing skills for leadership among staff is actively encouraged. This school is well placed to make the all necessary improvements specified.

SIAMS report February 2014 Royston St. John the Baptist C.E. (V.A.) Primary School, Royston, Barnsley. S71 4QY