



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Oswaldtwistle Hippings Methodist School

Heron Way
Oswaldtwistle
BB5 3BT

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Blackburn/West Pennine Moors Circuit

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 15 January 2015

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 119398

Headteacher: Janice Lewer

Inspector's name and number: John Horwood 177

School context

Hippings Methodist Primary School is an average size primary school which is a popular choice of parents. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. No pupils speak English as an additional language. There has been a high level of staffing changes during recent years due to ill health, retirement and maternity leaves. A new chaplain joined the school in September 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Oswaldtwistle Hippings Methodist Primary School as a Methodist school are good

- The headteacher leads by example in promoting Christian values to ensure that pupils develop outstanding relationships and behaviour.
- The strong faith of the headteacher and that of a large proportion of staff and governors means that pupils' spiritual development and well-being in their broadest sense are a priority.
- The leaders have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of this church school. They have a clear vision of how to enable pupils to develop their full potential through their ongoing promotion of Christian values.
- The improved partnership with the Methodist church through the chaplain is enabling pupils to accelerate their understanding of Methodist traditions.

Areas to improve

- Provide a more diverse range of opportunities for pupils to explore Christian traditions to help them learn about Christianity as a world-wide faith.
- Embed the excellent initiatives to improve the impact of worship and pupils' understanding of Methodist traditions to develop pupils' understanding of the Trinity and the work of John Wesley.

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

Comments made to the inspector by parents and governors include 'I have never been in another school like this one – the atmosphere is apparent as soon as you walk in' and 'adults and children are treated as special'. These typify the excellent ethos that has been developed to support pupils' learning and development within a school that successfully promotes Christian values and equal opportunities. The impact of Christian values on achievement and well-being is outstanding. Every pupil is valued and given help when needed. School data show that pupils of all abilities make similar progress in lessons. This is evident in the elimination of gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates. Pupils say they learn well because they enjoy lessons and like the teachers. Christian values such as love, peace and hope are part of every-day conversations. Each class is allocated a specific Christian value and pupils focus on each in turn as they move through the school. The values are supported by displays around the school, by the curriculum content and the worship content. Their impact is seen, for example, in the outstanding behaviour of pupils. Parents identify how the Christian character of the school leads to the excellent caring and friendly ethos within the school. The outstanding relationships developed by the school's ethos are demonstrated by the harmonious atmosphere enjoyed by staff, pupils and the large number of parents assembled on the playground at the start of the school day. This in turn demonstrates how well developed the Christian values of trust and respect are. Love and care for the pupils are demonstrated by the excellent and well-supported breakfast club where pupils enjoy a productive social gathering in a safe environment. They are also seen in the ongoing celebration of pupils' achievement through rewards and praise. Well-above average attendance demonstrates the school and parents working together to promote Christian fellowship. Pupils say that adults are always 'on hand' to support any rare lapses in behaviour - supporting the Christian value of justice. Pupils talk confidently about religious education (RE) and records show that the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The high profile of RE within the school makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. The vast majority of elements of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding for their age. The curriculum content ensures that pupils develop a very good understanding of and respect for diversity. However, pupils' understanding about Christianity being a multi-cultural world faith is limited. Pupils develop a knowledge, appropriate to their age, of the life and teaching of John Wesley and how his work influences people's lives. Their experiences of observing Methodist traditions and practices have been limited because of few opportunities for involvement with the local Methodist community. Church and school leaders have worked together on this concern and in September 2014 appointed a family worker as the school chaplain. This has had an immediate and outstanding impact on pupils' understanding of Methodist traditions and their understanding of the Trinity, for example. Pupils' thankfulness is demonstrated by their outstanding love of singing. The quality of their singing was recognised by them being invited to sing at a concert in Manchester.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils confirm that worship is an important part of the day. They talk confidently about how prayer helps them and is used to support others. The school's collective worship policy is well embedded into school routines and adults lead worship on a well-defined rota. Worship is very well-planned by the headteacher and the chaplain. Whole school worship is generally led by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher or a visitor such as the chaplain, the circuit superintendent or a diocesan visitor. This ensures that pupils experience a range of worship styles. Class teachers lead their key stage worship and all staff attend worship. This enables adults and pupils to share Christian fellowship. All pupils have the opportunity to lead worship as part of 'class-led worship' where they show a good understanding and confidence in, for example, the meaning of Christian values. Pupils and school records confirm that Bible stories are well used in worship. Pupils say that this helps them understand about the importance of

Jesus Christ within the Christian faith. Christian festivals are generally celebrated within the school building because of the difficulty in ensuring the large number of pupils can be escorted safely across the busy roads to the church. However, the recent Harvest celebration held in the church was enjoyed by parents, children and the church community and plans are already in place to develop further opportunities for church worship. The monitoring of the impact of worship has improved significantly since the previous inspection. In addition to monitoring carried out directly by the leaders there is a well-organised system for pupils to be members of the 'worship group' which plays a key role in organising and monitoring the impact of worship. Pupils and adults join in collective worship with enthusiasm. Themes for worship are identified each week and the associated Christian values identified to pupils. Members of the worship group observe pupils around the school and record the names of any pupil demonstrating that value for them to be rewarded. This supports the evidence they have about the impact of worship. Worship often includes practical activities or drama to support the values which are being promoted. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to worship are outstanding. The impact of the worship is demonstrated by the way pupils adopt Christian values and the way they join in with prayer. Pupils are aware of quiet spaces around the school for individual prayer and describe with excitement the 'prayer stones' which pupils use to support their thoughts and prayers. The chaplain provides excellent work with pupils to support their understanding of worship and Methodist traditions and this is developing their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit from their current basic awareness. Foundation governors attend worship on a regular basis and give other governors feedback about the quality and the impact of worship which is then reviewed as part of their regular discussions on church school effectiveness.

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

The headteacher, through her strong faith, has provided outstanding leadership in promoting Christian values throughout the school. The vision and values of school leaders, including the governing body, have had a strong impact on the effectiveness of the school as a Methodist church school. However, during a period of significant staff absence and changes in personnel both in the school and the church community the development of this effectiveness has slowed. Nevertheless, during the past year, as a result of a combined effort of the school and the church, there is clear evidence of a capacity to become outstanding. For example, there has been insufficient time to develop a wide range of meaningful links with other Christian denominations and other faiths to support what pupils learn within the curriculum. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's aims and core purpose and, with the leadership team, lead by example in promoting the school as a church school. School distinctiveness is now the first item on the school development plan and religious education is considered to be a core subject. This has led to, for example, the appointment of the Chaplain to support worship and RE. Governors support the school leaders in ensuring that Christian values permeate throughout the school activities and in the development of every pupil to his or her full ability. This has led to high performance in all aspects of pupils' academic and personal skills. The leaders' self-evaluation of the school as a church school is accurate and is fully supported by the inspection evidence. Pupils show a strong commitment to Christian stewardship, supporting a range of charities local, national and international. This helps pupils develop their understanding of the needs of others in a wider cultural context. Leaders and the school community are proud of the Christian character of the school and its association with the Methodist community. Although parents do not always choose the school because it is a church school those who the inspector spoke to were positive about the values promoted. Staff are given regular opportunities for training to support their future development as potential church school leaders and a previous Key Stage 2 senior teacher was promoted to a position as deputy in another local school.