



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bidston Village Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ballantyne Drive
Bidston
Birkenhead
CH43 7XG

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection (SIAMS) grade: Good

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Wirral

Dates of inspection: 27 April 2016

Date of last inspection: 17 January 2011

School's unique reference number: 131281

Head teacher: Lynne Hazeldine

Inspector's name and number: Jane Brooke 658

School context

This is a slightly larger than average primary school of 334 with the majority of pupils from White British backgrounds which serves an area of social and economic deprivation. There is a high degree of mobility of pupils. The number of pupils supported by pupil premium, with special educational needs and on free school meals, is well above average. There are two education bases in the school. From September 2015 provision for 2 year olds has been offered in a new purpose built area of the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bidston Village Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- Outstanding leadership of the head teacher which enables staff to support all pupils. As a result every pupil is valued as a child made in the image of God and behaviour is exemplary.
- Inspirational singing in worship makes a significant impact upon the spiritual development of the school community.
- The Christian Ethos group is bringing a renewed focus on Christian Distinctiveness.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the governing body monitors and evaluates the church school action plan in order to be informed and to plan future developments.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship so that they develop further both socially and spiritually.
- Involve the whole school family in devising a summary of the mission statement that is child-friendly and encapsulates the Christian ethos. As a result all will be clearer about the Christian purpose of the school.

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

The mission statement of the school is, 'Working in partnership to achieve high standards in a welcoming, caring Christian community where everyone feels valued and respected.' This is an excellent summary of the atmosphere in this calm, warm school where every pupil is valued as a unique individual, made in the image of God. All pupils make good progress. Pupils with special needs flourish under the care of staff who nurture and challenge them based upon a deep Christian love. Attendance is good and has improved due to rigorous focussing upon care for individual's needs and the giving of awards rather than punishment. As a result of staff persistence and the work on assertive mentoring, behaviour is exemplary around the school. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about taking on the responsibility of being play leaders and helping younger children to join in with others in the playground. Visual symbols, bright colourful displays and appropriate biblical quotations in the corridors, the halls and some of the classrooms celebrate the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Pupils know that they are a church school but do not know the school mission statement. The pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good, stimulated by their own productions such as 'The Lion King'. This is further strengthened by visits, for example, to museums and the 'Gruffalo Trail' in Delamere Park. Reflecting and writing about multicultural books helps pupils to empathise and reflect upon their own place in the world. Through fundraising for Operation Christmas Child and other charities, pupils are encouraged to follow the example of Jesus Christ and give to others who are in greater need than themselves. Staff are concerned to build pupil self-esteem and positive attitudes. This is achieved through praise and the rewards systems based upon Christian values agreed by the school. Pupils better understand the wider Christian community when they join other schools in 'The Big Sing' at Chester Cathedral. Religious education supports the Christian character of the school to excellent effect. Pupils reflect upon the teaching and life of Jesus and how he changed other people. They understand the diversity of faiths through learning about Buddhism and Sikhism. However, pupils do not learn about multicultural Christianity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Collective worship is planned around Christian values. It is led by staff and the vicar and all staff attend and participate in worship so that pupils understand the high regard given to worship in the school. The singing in worship is joyful and inspirational. All pupils sing with enthusiasm and vigour as pupils enter the hall and as they leave. The sacred time is marked by the lighting and extinguishing of a candle both of which are accompanied by singing and praising God. Pupils say they like the challenge of 'thinking hard' and reflecting about stories during worship. As the pupils sing the hymns with gusto the whole hall becomes filled with a sense of a community united in worshipping God. One pupil said that the singing 'makes me think about things I am grateful for'. The large wall displays created by every class and centred on a Christian theme offer an environment for worship which recognises and celebrates the Christian faith. Opportunities for free prayer are given in worship. One Year 1 pupil said spontaneously, 'Thank you God for my heart, health and life'. However, there is no use of formal greeting or prayers such as the 'Lord be with you' or 'the

grace' to connect the language in school worship with church services. Prayers are said in some classes at the end of the day. Pupils do not yet plan or lead the worship. The recently established Key Stage 2 Christian Ethos group is beginning to take ownership of the Christian distinctiveness of the school. They are rightly proud of the corner called, 'The Lord's cornerstone' where they say pupils can hold stones, be calm and pray. They are keen to offer more consistent opportunities for pupils to pray. Not every classroom has a reflective area.

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

Christian values are articulated through the example and practice of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Christian gratitude is not only explained through the telling of Biblical stories such as the ten lepers, it is also demonstrated through the headteacher and staff being grateful to each other and to the pupils. The headteacher wrote a letter to every class thanking them for collecting so many tubes of toothpaste for 'Rock of Joy'. She encourages and enables staff to create a safe, orderly, positive and exciting learning environment for all pupils underpinned by Christian values. The well-being of pupils and staff are a priority. All conversations and decisions are motivated by Christian compassion and concern. Senior and middle leaders attend network meetings and diocesan courses to improve their teaching and management skills. Governors are an active supportive presence as they attend worship and some lessons. Although the church school action plan is clear and focussed, governors do not monitor and evaluate it. The arrangements for collective worship and religious education meet statutory requirements. The local vicar, the Chair of Governors, is a popular, positive presence in the school and readily available for pastoral support. Messy Church, which started four years ago, attracts fifty pupils. This is a clear sign of the positive Christian mission taking place in the locality as a result of the links between the church and the school. Information flows between the school and the church to encourage attendance at worship of adults and children in both places. Parental feedback through questionnaires shows that the majority of parents consider that the school supports their child's well-being and that the church school ethos is evident in its daily practice. Parents speak enthusiastically about the open welcome they receive from the school and that every teacher knows every pupil by name. One parent spoke of staff enquiring about her child by name even after she had left the school. The inclusive character of the school is summarised by one parent of an autistic child. She said that the school had helped and supported the child to settle in and to learn so that there had been no issues with learning or attendance.

SIAMS report April 2016, Bidston Village Church of England School, Birkenhead CH43 7XG