



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Matthew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary and Nursery School

Mayo Avenue
Bankfoot
Bradford
BD5 8HT

Previous SIAS grade: Good
Current inspection grade: Good
Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Bradford
Dates of inspection: 4th July 2016
Date of last inspection: 18th October 2010
School's unique reference number: 107303
Headteacher: Kay Remmer (Acting)
Inspector's name and number: Mark Edwards 837

School context

St Matthew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School and Nursery is a larger than average school with 483 pupils on roll. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds with many families that experience high levels of social and economic disadvantage. 88.6% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with the majority being of Pakistani origin. There is a rising and significant number of pupils from Eastern European countries. 72% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of children eligible for free school meals (36.6 %) and SEN (17%) are both above the national average. The current acting headteacher has been in post for six months.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Matthew's Primary as a Church of England school are good

- Strong and focussed leadership of the school that sets high expectations for all members of the community
- Supportive relationships between all stakeholders that enable everyone to feel nurtured and part of the community
- Very strong commitment by everyone to developing core values, reflection and prayer enabling pupils to grow in confidence, character and spiritual awareness
- The school has tackled previous underachievement resulting in significant and rapid progress in a short period of time

Areas to improve

- To develop further governors' ability to challenge, evaluate and articulate the impact of the school's work on Christian distinctiveness
- Develop evaluation strategies that can show a clear influence upon strategic direction
- To develop further learning opportunities to broaden pupils' understanding of Christian traditions, the Trinity and Christianity as a world religion

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

The importance placed upon Christian Values at St Matthew's Primary School is evident immediately on entering the building. The promotion of these values impacts upon pupils, staff and parents in such a way as to ensure both personal and academic progress and promotes the high standards of respect and tolerance within the school community. Pupils have a highly developed understanding of the values they hold, one pupil stating, "You don't need to know what our values are, you just need to look at the way we act". The school uses innovative ways of weaving their core values into all areas of the curriculum and school routines. Values form the foundation for the behaviour policy that further embeds values into the culture of the school. Behaviour is of a high standard and pupils demonstrate a deep care for each other. Community cohesion is served in a clearly Christian context with many family events being held throughout the year. This results in the development of positive relationships both within the school community and beyond. Support offered to pupils and families when they enter the school is underpinned by values of love and service.

Parents talk of staff "going that extra mile" for them and their children. They cite the "new to English" family celebration whereby culture and uniqueness is celebrated. The raising of aspiration has led to a rapid and significant improvement in academic standards during this academic year. For example, good levels of development for reception pupils have improved to reach national standards by increasing by 12% and pupil premium pupil attainment improving by 31%.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils and families to develop a personal spirituality. Family trips, visits and extra curricular activities are an important part of the provision at the school. Pupils are able to articulate how these help them understand and appreciate others and the world around them.

Pupils have a clear understanding of biblical stories and can articulate exceptionally well how these relate to the school's core values and their individual actions. The story of the Good Samaritan is a core feature of pupils' daily life, with one good Samaritan chosen daily in each class. Pupils and staff nominate pupils for their good deeds and support of each other; this further supports the school's work in developing the value of service to others. Pupils are able to express some of the school's core values in relation to their understanding of, and respect for, other religions and communities. What is less developed is pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world religion, the Trinity and Christian traditions.

Religious education (RE) plays a significant part in promoting the Christian character of the school through an approach that challenges pupils to tackle the "Big Questions" which pupils answer with confidence and empathy. Work on world religions clearly shows how pupils learn about religion as well as learning from other religions. Standards in RE are in line with standards across the school with assessment and pupil feedback questions that help pupils identify next steps.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils speak positively about collective worship. Pupils are eager to participate and lead collective worship. The innovative way in which pupils are able to pitch an assembly theme to the assistant head and then plan and deliver it clearly shows that the school have ably met one of the areas for development from the previous inspection. Pupils derive benefit from the variety and quality of additional visitors who regularly contribute to individual acts of worship. The local vicar plays an important role and pupils, parents and parishioners speak highly of the recently strengthened links with the church of St Matthew's. Pupils' voice is heard and acted upon through the evaluation of the collective worship process. What is less clear, however, is how this contributes to the strategic development.

The act of collective worship seen during the inspection demonstrates well-embedded routines. Confident singing, the use of different media, video clips, drama, personal reflection time and

biblical readings maintained pupils' focus. Pupils are able to articulate the meaning of the worship as well as being able to relate this to their daily actions.

Prayer is central to collective worship. There is evidence from displays around the school, the use of a prayer tree and work in books that pupils are given appropriate opportunities to write prayers and reflect upon their place in the world. Displays around school enable pupils to demonstrate their developing spiritual understanding and inclusivity. One example from a younger pupil demonstrated this well, "All the faiths fit together to make our world". Pupils understand the importance of prayer and can articulate well the purpose of prayer. Reflection plays an important part in collective worship and as a consequence pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of their own personal spirituality within a context of personal prayer. Worship is firmly based upon biblical stories and the person of Jesus Christ and is often linked to the school's core values which deepen pupils' understanding. What is less developed in the school's provision for collective worship is pupils' understanding of Anglican traditions and their ability to consider the Trinity as it pertains to the Christian faith.

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

The school is well led by the acting headteacher who leads with integrity, passion for its church identity and is dedicated in her support of the families attending the school. Standards of progress across the school are improving rapidly this academic year and the school's values underpin this by having a clear focus upon aspiration. All staff and pupils understand this focus. As a significant number of pupils begin from a lower than national average starting point and many with English as an additional language, the school places huge importance in developing pupils' language fluency. The way the leadership promotes family learning is a strength and is embedded in the school's wish to serve its community.

The school leadership team is explicit about its church distinctiveness, whilst being inclusive and contributing significantly to community cohesion in the locality. The mutually beneficial relationship with the local church has had greater prominence in the last six months with the vicar citing that the parish has learnt much from the school about the true meaning of inclusion. The school makes good use of visitors, and its recent recruitment of local parishioners to support the school through the development of reading buddies has contributed to the school's ability to raise standards. Parental engagement is high at the school and parents value the good communication the school has with them.

Because all staff model the school's core values pupils' understanding of them is impressive.

Pupils can demonstrate how they live out and promote these values in their dealings with each other in the playground and through their response to charitable organisations.

The school's leadership team understands the school and has procedures in place to monitor and evaluate aspects of its Christian distinctiveness. They recognise the need to make explicit links between their findings and develop a clearer strategic structure to ensure all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness are fully developed. Governors are developing their understanding of monitoring, evaluation, challenge and support. What is less clear is their ability to demonstrate their impact upon developing the school's Christian character and strategic direction.

The school takes part in diocesan training and local support groups for the teaching of RE and recognises the part it plays in developing school leaders. Senior staff have completed middle leadership courses and the acting headteacher has access to a mentor from another church school to support her church school leadership. School leaders have put in place provision for collective worship and religious education that meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report July 2016 St Matthew's Church of England (VC) Primary School BD5 8HT