



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Walsden St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Rochdale Road
Todmorden
West Yorkshire
OL14 6RN

Previous SIAS grade: good

Current inspection grade: good

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Calderdale

Dates of inspection: 22 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 9 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 135862

Headteacher: Peter Stevenson

Inspector's name and number: Lorraine Hanson (769)

School context

Walsden St Peter's is a smaller than average sized primary school in which almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of special educational needs or an education health care plan is above national average. St Peter's Church, which is a ten minute walk from the school, has been in interregnum since October 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Walsden St Peter's as a Church of England school are good

- School life is permeated by the Christian ethos, which impacts extremely positively on children enabling them to thrive in their personal development, behaviour and attitudes, which are exemplary
- The Christian character and values of the school, together with collective worship and religious education significantly impact on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which are outstanding
- Relationships across the school are extremely positive and supportive and founded on Christian principles
- The inclusive nature of the school is based upon well understood Christian values

Areas to improve

- Develop a more rigorous system of monitoring and evaluating the school's distinctiveness as a church school, including through feedback from the wider school community, to inform future development
- Involve governors in planning and regular monitoring and evaluation of collective worship to promote continued improvement
- Provide focus in collective worship on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit to heighten children's awareness and develop their understanding further of the Holy Trinity

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

At Walsden St Peter's School the Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life and is founded on distinct Christian values, which include friendship, forgiveness, compassion and justice. Parents, governors and staff recognise the significant impact the Christian ethos has on children's outstanding behaviour and attitudes. Everyone is valued and children thrive in their personal and academic development. Their attainment is high at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 and their progress is good. Children are enthusiastic about school and their attendance is above average. Additional provision is made for children who need further nurture, for example through the Lunchtime Lions Club. Relationships at all levels in the school are exemplary. Parents remark on the happy atmosphere in school and how children are always keen to go to school. Children are supportive of one another and older children readily take responsibility for helping younger children, for example through the buddy system where Year 6 children partner with reception children, helping them with reading or the walk to church during the year. A parent commented that it is one of the highlights of Year 6 to find out who their buddy will be. Collective worship, religious education (RE) and aspects of the curriculum enable children to make informed choices based on Christian values. For example Year 4 children showed their understanding and commitment to justice through their literacy work on a novel about apartheid entitled 'Journey to Jo-burg'. One child commented, 'We should treat everyone fairly and with respect, whatever their race'. This illustrates the high level of respect for difference and diversity that children have, which is nurtured from a young age by the school. Year 2 children are involved in a link with another Todmorden school, which has a high percentage of children from different ethnic and faith backgrounds to the Walsden St Peter's children. They meet together termly and learn together, form friendships and develop their understanding of different cultures. The Christian character and values of the school, together with collective worship and RE have significant impact on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which are outstanding. The school environment supports and emphasises the Christian ethos well, meeting a development point from the previous inspection. This is illustrated through the interactive display outside the hall, where children can press a button to play a recording of an explanation for each section of the Lord's Prayer. Children are able to discern similarities between Christianity and other world religions and work displayed shows that they recognise that values are important to those of other faith traditions too. Children's spirituality is promoted through the accessibility of prayer boxes and the reflection areas in classrooms and playground, where they are encouraged to respond personally to prompts for contemplation or prayer. Parents said that children sometimes initiate prayers at home and they were particularly moved by a talk about the challenges for the people in Sierra Leone, which was given by a representative of International Aid Trust. Children showed their compassion by adding to a column of coins in the hall, often from their own money boxes, to support the charity. Children understand Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith through the school's links with Christians in Mara and Sierra Leone. Children are excited and challenged by RE lessons. They learn about and from RE. Year 1 children were guided through the story of Jesus calming the storm by participating in drama. Children showed their empathy with the feelings of the disciples on the boat and they could explain the significance of the story. One child commented, 'If we believe in Jesus we can feel happy and safe'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the school day, children participate with enjoyment and they know a wide repertoire of worship songs. Worship takes a variety of forms including whole school, key stage and year group. The headteacher and school leaders select themes and plan the overview for collective worship. Themes are based on Christian values, Bible stories and personal, social and emotional development. The input to worship from clergy from St Peter's Church has been intermittent for a few years due to the current interregnum and previous

clergy absence. The headteacher and all teachers lead worship. Occasional clergy led worship has been re-established recently, for example when a local member of the clergy led a Pentecost Service in school. However, at present it has not been possible for this to be a regular feature. Collective worship impacts positively on children's exemplary attitudes and behaviour as well as relationships across school. Children understand the seasons of the Christian year through displays explaining the liturgical colours and major Christian festivals are marked with whole school worship in the church at Harvest, Christmas, Easter and St Peter's Day. These services are well attended and appreciated by parents. 'I was really moved by the children's powerful enactment of the crucifixion of Jesus at the Easter Service', a parent commented. Prayer has a high profile in the school, Grace is said before lunch and the Lord's Prayer and the school prayer are displayed around school. The children know these prayers and they are regularly offered in worship. Children's spirituality is nurtured through the reflective areas in classrooms and outside, where they can respond personally through reflection or prayer. The prayer boxes around school are well used and children sometimes read out the prayers they have written in collective worship. Children's prayers are shared in displays around school and a collection of children's prayers have been made into a book and placed in the hall. Children enjoy reading the prayers written by other children. Year 4 children presented their work on the story of Noah's Ark to the whole school collective worship and explained what the story had taught them, for example, 'Always listen to God's instructions and be grateful for the world we have'. Throughout the school children contribute to aspects of planning and leading class worship, with the support of staff. They grow in ability and confidence as they go through school so by Year 6 children are able to plan and lead acts of collective worship independently. Children say they enjoy participating in drama based on Bible stories in collective worship. Some evaluation of collective worship by staff takes place, together with views collected from children. However regular planned monitoring and evaluation of worship involving the wider school community is not yet in place. Children have some awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, though collective worship does not have a strong focus on the Holy Trinity.

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

The strong caring leadership of the headteacher together with the support of dedicated school leaders and staff promote an ethos which is founded on Christian values and impacts very positively on children and the whole life of the school. Parents value the Christian ethos of the school and testify to the positive impact it has on their children. A parent commented, 'The Christian ethos influences how children are with each other, respecting and caring for each other'. Parents are very supportive of the school and their contribution is much appreciated. An example of this was when parents used social media to gather a working party to clear deep mud from the playground, following last winter's floods, before school reopened after Christmas. Links with St Peter's Church have been maintained during the interregnum and clergy absences, through school services held in church, class visits, family service information on newsletters, school children singing at church events including at the recent church craft fair and through a Licensed Reader at St Peter's who is also a Foundation Governor. The school engages positively with the diocese to support the Christian character of the school through staff and governors participation in training courses. A focus for development from the last inspection was to formally evaluate the distinctive nature of Walsden St Peter's as a Church of England School in order to inform appropriate future development. Monitoring and evaluation has been carried out by school staff together with informal feedback received from parents. In addition, a newly appointed Foundation Governor, with the designation of RE Governor, has met with school leaders, toured the school and discussed the distinctive nature of the school. This has been a valuable and informative evaluation. However monitoring and evaluation is not yet on a formal or regular footing and does not systematically gather feedback from a range of stakeholders. The RE leaders are well supported, which has enabled them to implement a new scheme of work this year and bring about many improvements to the RE curriculum. Children enjoy RE, they are keen to participate and they make good progress.

SIAMS report June 2016 Walsden St Peter's CE (VC) Primary School, Todmorden OL14 6RN