



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Forsbrook Church of England (VC) Primary School

Cheadle Road
Blythe Bridge
Stoke on Trent
Staffordshire ST11 1PW

Diocese: Lichfield

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 30 June 2016

Date of last inspection: July 2011

School's unique reference number: 132260

Head teacher: Natasha Richards / Kelly Minor

Inspector's name and number: Revd. Alison M. Morris 759

School context

Forsbrook Church of England Primary School is a smaller than an average-sized primary school with 208 pupils. It is a single form entry school which serves the immediate area of Forsbrook and surrounding area of Stoke. The numbers of pupils eligible for support through additional funding known as the pupil premium are well below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with very few EAL pupils. Since September 2015 the school has been led by two 'co-headteachers,' the principal headteacher and the former deputy headteacher who share leadership. In the recent Ofsted inspection, the school was judged to be outstanding.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Forsbrook Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The distinctive Christian school vision, based on Christian values is effectively promoted through the dedication and committed leadership of the co-headteachers.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) play a key role in expressing the school's inclusive Christian character and pupils' development.
- Christian values, embedded in the excellent spiritual, moral, social and personal development of pupils.

Area to improve

- Revisit documentation on the vision and governance to clarify and embed further monitoring and evaluation of Christian distinctiveness, ethos and collective worship.
- Foster more partnerships and strategies to allow pupils to encounter different faith traditions to deepen their understanding of cultural diversity.
- Through development of the Worship Committee, engage pupils with the incumbent and Children's Youth Leader to refine the process of planning, monitoring and evaluating collective worship.

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

Pupils from all ability groups achieve well, and most reach excellent standards of attainment within a school that is overtly Christian in character. Effective intervention programmes such as the Forest School and excellent SEND provision ensure disadvantaged pupils' attainment is higher than that of similar pupils nationally. Christian values and ethos are being embedded into the school's life and work, expressed in documentation and through a well-structured website. The promotion of core Christian values such as love, joy, hope and peace set the expectation for how all should live. This is clearly understood and practised by all who belong to this caring and stimulating Christian community. It also supports the commitment to meet the needs of the whole child, supported by exemplary pastoral care and an exciting creative curriculum. This inclusive approach is much valued by parents. Pupils feel secure, enjoy school and feel cared for especially in times of challenge. All pupils are treated with dignity, respected, valued and nurtured as unique individuals. As a result, pupils from all faiths are confident to speak about their beliefs, expressing their thoughts and views in depth. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development (SMSC) is nourished and challenged by core Christian values which have a high priority in the school development plan. Religious education also makes a very significant contribution to pupils' SMSC, as belief matters in this school. Harmonious staff relationships provide excellent Christian role models which are attributed to both Christian character and values. Standards of behaviour and management are exemplary due to clear guidelines and expectations which are also clearly underpinned by Christian values. Pupils have a good sense of morality, self-belief and self-esteem. They have high expectations with excellent attitudes to learning, so they are well motivated and keen to attend school and so absence is minimal. One pupil referred to the school as '*paradise*.' Older pupils understand what it means to be a pupil at a church school and make the link to Christian teaching in the Bible. An effective school council allows them to develop responsibilities and to contribute to decision making such as the Eco Project. Pupils participate in the mission of the wider community through fundraising, for example to Cystic Fibrosis. A focus for development from the last inspection has been successfully addressed with more explicit Christian signs and symbols including a new school logo, displays of Christian artefacts and Bible quotes throughout the school. Pupils' spiritual awareness is encouraged through the development of the outdoor quiet areas including 'Lucy's garden'.

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

Worship is distinctively Christian and evokes a sense of gathering and believing. It has a strong focus on the person of Jesus Christ and the Trinity through the use of interactive media including biblical material. It is inclusive, spiritual and accessible which makes an outstanding impact upon reinforcing and embedding Christian values within school life. Pupils are well-engaged and sing enthusiastically in worship within a distinctive Christian spiritual atmosphere. Visual images, symbols and lighted candles are used as a focal point to encourage a real sense of awe and wonder. Collective worship is very well planned using the liturgical calendar and themes that connect to Bible stories. These are rooted in both British values and Christian values for life. As a result, worship creates an excellent learning environment through its moral messages which influence pupils' actions, attitudes and behaviour. Pupils have a positive attitude to worship because it relates to their own experiences and so meets their spiritual needs. Purposeful pupil involvement in leading worship is seen through participation in drama, reading the Bible, lighting the candles and leading prayers. Key Christian festivals are celebrated in St. Peter's church which reinforces the spiritual link between church and school. Emerging strong links with the new vicar and the new children's youth worker, as well as established relationships with the foundation governors ensure that Christian values are reinforced along with Anglican traditions and practice. Regular visits by both the Anglican and Methodist clergy to take collective worship nurtures pupils' attitudes to faith and strengthen pupil's spiritual development. Additional activities such as the weekly Christian Club called 'Little Fishes' and Messy Church greatly enhance worship experiences in both school and church. Spiritual development is exemplary and provides older pupils with the skills to discuss and consider the deeper aspects of a personal faith and to ask the 'big questions. Opportunities for pupils to reflect are enriched and encouraged through focussed displays and artefacts in the foyer and hall, as well as prayer corners which visually express the school's Christian distinctiveness. Prayer is a key part of school life, not only

for the pupils, but also the staff and governors. Pupils write their own personal prayers in class prayer books and are provided with a range of approaches for reflection and quiet prayer including use of a prayer tree. Response to prayer is enthusiastic and pupils speak of how they feel personally when engaging in prayer. They understand the purpose and the impact that prayers has in their lives. A pupil said, *'You pray for God's will in prayer'*. Effective evaluation records of worship from pupils' questionnaires provide feedback to enable staff and governors to have a clear indication of how to plan and improve upon quality worship. Foundation governors also have a developing role in planning, monitoring and evaluating the act of worship and its impact, but it needs to be formally embedded to inform future planning, so that high quality worship can be ensured.

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

The co-headteachers, supported well by governors, staff and parents are committed to the Christian foundation of the school. Through the work of the governors on the church school links committee, a simple vision has been shared which has a profound impact upon the school and which is recognised by the pupils and in the wider community. All stakeholders understand and ensure that the distinctive Christian values and ethos pervades, and are vital to the school's vision. This results in a caring ethos that permeates around the whole school. The revised mission statement has been clarified to ensure that the distinctive Christian root of all learning is explicitly interpreted. The parish incumbent is a regular visitor nurturing the very close links that exist between church and school. All governors and staff have an honest and challenging view of the future developmental needs of this school. They are supportive of the strategic drive to improve academic progress for pupils, their well-being and embed and develop the Christian distinctiveness even further. Effective self-evaluation uses rigorous and robust systems for data analysis, with monitoring and evaluation of pupil's achievement, successfully implemented through the governors' standards committee. Governors plan strategically and their decisions are consistently informed by the school's Christian mission to the community. This has a positive impact upon the way that the school is enabled to live out its Christian vision. Significant contribution by the co-headteachers through targeted professional development and succession planning has strengthened the capacity to plan for future development and to ensure continued success. Exemplary relationships throughout the school show the key role that Christian values play in the community. Collective worship and RE are led inspirationally and creatively and with an enthusiasm which radiates through to the staff and pupils. A well-planned structured RE scheme fosters and enhances self-awareness and a deep respect of Christian values and beliefs. It also develops a deeper understanding and knowledge of other world faiths such as Hinduism. Pupils' books are scrutinised and standards monitored by senior leaders which ensures that RE has a high profile within the school. Progress and enrichment is encouraged through extra-curricular activities such as the Scholars Choir which contributes to pupils' personal development. Strong purposeful partnerships exist with the diocese, multi-agencies and the wider community which helps to meet pupils learning needs. Relationships with parents are positive and effective which enhances pupils' learning. One parent commented, *'pupils have genuine excitement to come to school'*. Parents are confident and happy with the school as a church school and state that their requests and issues are dealt with efficiently and appropriately so that pupils' needs are met. Parents also speak highly of the school's communication with them, the care and concern shown to their children and the very professional way in which staff work. Parents know the school is a safe and secure environment which enables their children to flourish socially, spiritually and academically. One parent said; *'this is an extension of our family'*. Pupils have a strong sense of Christian identity and belonging. They also recognise and value diversity and are beginning to be culturally aware of their wider responsibilities within society. Effective strategies and experiences to foster cultural diversity include Den's Day, a school link in Spain and work with the diocesan St. Chad's Trust Volunteer programme.