



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **St Bartholomew's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School**

Strawberry Lane  
Armley  
Leeds LS12 1SF

#### **Diocese: Ripon and Leeds**

Local authority: Leeds

Date of inspection: 19 March 2014

Date of last inspection: 14 January 2009

School's unique reference number: 108005

Headteacher: Mrs Pauline Gavin

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Ruth Packwood 524

#### **School context**

St Bartholomew's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is an inner city multi-cultural school which, since the previous inspection, has increased substantially and is now 3 form entry. The school reflects the diverse local community. Over half the pupils do not have English as their first language and 50% are eligible for the pupil premium. Nearly 10% of pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or are at School Action Plus. Pupil mobility has reduced but is still around 20%, and 12% of the school population arrive each year without having previously received any formal education. The school is well-regarded by the local community and parents from outside the catchment area choose to send their children there. These children make up 20% of the school population.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Bartholomew's as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- On entering the school, the Christian character of the school is evident in the mission statement, displays and permanent art work. The total commitment of all staff to trust, friendship, service, compassion, respect and justice, and the way in which they live out these values daily is at the heart of St Bartholomew's.
- These Christian values shape attitudes, aspirations and the curriculum, and contribute to an environment where Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development is nurtured and children flourish.
- Staff have very high expectations of all children and successfully create a climate where children are motivated to be the best that they can be.
- In this secure, safe and happy environment with exceptional hard work from all staff, every child in the school makes outstanding progress and this is recognised nationally and locally.

#### **Areas to improve**

- To further the links of the school with the community through the Inter-faith relations officer.

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

All staff work extremely hard and are absolutely committed to the development of every child. The school is organised so that this can be achieved. Through observation, assessment and careful analysis of data, staff get to know their children very well. Daily cross phase, and weekly phase meetings ensure that concerns about welfare or progress are identified quickly and interventions to address needs are put in place promptly. All children are seen within the context of their families and a highly effective family support worker is available to work with families in time of need. She runs the very well attended before and after school clubs and organises play schemes during each school holiday. Year 6 children who attend after school support classes receive a cooked tea. A number of children arrived in the school from Slovakia. They had not previously received any formal education. Two classes were created for the children to learn basic English and Maths during the morning and they are integrated with children in their age group for other work. Children quickly gain confidence and are taught with their peers as soon as possible. All of these children have gone on to reach at least age-related expectations in national tests. Other children, who are challenged by speaking in English, receive 'pre-teaching' of Mathematics concepts and stories, often in their mother tongue, so that they can access the curriculum more easily in class. The school has a special unit for children who exhibit challenging behaviour in local schools. In this calm environment they thrive. They are then reintroduced to larger classes and a number have chosen to stay on at the school. The data and detailed case studies show that these children have also made exceptional progress. The school uses the time before school effectively to run additional reading support schemes and all children are encouraged to come into school from 8:30 onwards to read with an adult. Relationships are excellent and very good behaviour is expected by both children and adults. Parents and children know that any issues raised will be dealt with promptly. Children talk about their own spiritual journeys with confidence and a number expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn about the Christian faith, and to explore any similarities with their own beliefs. The teaching of RE contributes well to this and the Religious Education and Collective worship co-ordinator is also the Personal, Social and Health Education co-ordinator and makes good links between the Christian vision and values and well-being. Children are confident, happy and obviously enjoy school. There is a palpable sense of trust and respect within the school.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship is valued highly by pupils and staff. It takes place at the end of the school day in order to provide a time for reflection and to send the children home in a positive way. This works very well. Children are engaged and challenged to reflect or pray about how they can incorporate Christian values into their own lives. Classes lead collective worship on a weekly basis. Year 4 talked and acted out the theme of Lent as a time of fasting and preparation for Jesus and also encouraged the school to 'dig deeper' into their own lives and experiences for opportunities to be more generous or to do something for others. There was clear reference to Biblical material and Christian teaching. The time for worship used a candle as a focus, and invited reflection and the opportunity to pray. No pressure was put on children of other faiths or different beliefs to pray, and it was truly both inspirational and inclusive. Children left the hall to go home in an orderly and respectful way, singing songs and with smiles on their faces. No child is currently withdrawn from collective worship. Parents attending this event were enthusiastic and impressed with what their children were doing. Collective worship meets statutory requirements. It is planned by the Headteacher and broadly reflects the Church's year and Christian festivals. Records show that there is a strong focus on developing the children's understanding of the person of Jesus Christ and on stories from the Bible. Christian values identified in these stories are then promoted within school in a focused way. The understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God is developed in an age appropriate manner through teaching and prayer. There are also two striking murals in school, one depicting the Holy Spirit as a dove descending with the words, "This is my beloved

Son, in whom I am well pleased” based on Matthew 3: 16,17; and the other with a lighthouse, “Jesus is the light of the world” John 8:12. These provide good starting points for discussion. The local vicar who is Chair of Governors and a Foundation Governor is well aware of what the school is doing, and the newly appointed Foundation Governor has already been into school to evaluate worship. Views are sought from children and staff and feed into the planning process. Children are involved in planning worship and the School Council are planning the forthcoming Easter Service in Church. Worship does not generally take place in classrooms but each classroom displays the school prayer which was recently composed by three children in Year 6. This prayer is used daily by the whole school community. Events marking the Christian calendar are celebrated in the church and very well attended by the whole community. The vicar has noticed an increase in his congregation from families in the school in recent years and the church and school work closely together to meet the spiritual and social needs of the community.

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

The school is led by an excellent Headteacher who has a very clear vision of what she wants for each child within a Christian context. Her length of service in the school has contributed significantly to the consistent approach and to the commitment of all staff. She is ably supported by an effective governing body who have risen to the challenges of their role and addressed their needs through training. They are totally supportive of the Christian vision of the school, its clear distinctiveness and also of initiatives the Head teacher takes to constantly improve its effectiveness.

The leadership are committed to the professional development of all staff. This starts with their attitudes to students, who they encourage, nurture and include in the day to day life of the school. Unsolicited letters from students are an endorsement of this approach as are the letters received from the Teacher Training Institutions. The school is also involved with an ‘On the Job’ training scheme. Most staff are recruited after they have been students at the school. This ensures that they understand the Christian values and ethos of the school and the very high expectations the school has of them. They also know the expectations the school has for each of the pupils and the care and support they offer to families. As a result there is a very stable school staff who form a united team and who support each other. The impact of this is felt by the staff themselves who are excited to be a part of such a successful school and are aware of the value placed on them and the contribution they make.

Children, staff, parents and governors are all extremely proud of the school and are very aware of the Christian character and values which they feel enrich the school. Children are consulted on specific school issues on a half-termly basis and parents are consulted termly. Before School Club now starts at 7:15 a.m. in order to meet the needs of parents who start work early. Members of School Council said that they appreciate the fact that their voice is heard and that suggestions they make are acted upon. They were closely involved in the decision to replace aircraft style dining trays with plates which they then helped to choose. Staff remarked that children are appreciative of the help they receive and often thank the staff for it.

Parents and carers cannot praise the staff highly enough. They know that nothing is too much for staff and many write of the transformational impact the school has had on the life of their child. They also talk about the impact the Christian values have on the wider community where there is little racial tension and very positive attitudes to each other among residents. There is wide support for the annual multi-cultural evening and Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas, Easter and other celebrations that take place in church are very well attended.

SIAMS report March 2014 St Bartholomew’s C of E VC Primary School Leeds LS12 ISF