

# National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Walmsley Church of England Primary School

Blackburn Road  
Egerton  
Bolton  
BL7 9SA

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Bolton

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Date of last inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> November 2008

School's unique reference number: 105232

Headteacher: Mrs Debra Carr

Inspector's name and number: Mr Ian Young NS 176

## School context

Walmsley Church of England Primary is a popular school of 315 pupils situated on the outskirts of Bolton. There are strong links with the church and parents work in partnership with the school community to secure the best possible provision for all children. The school holds a number of nationally accredited awards and exceeds the Government's current floor targets for English and Mathematics.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Walmsley Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

The school is distinctive because the Christian ethos is promoted throughout the school creating a harmonious family environment where pupils are excited about their learning and proud of their achievements. It is effective because highly valued partnerships within the community extend opportunities for pupils to develop their faith and understanding of Christian values. Staff and pupils alike are part of a nurturing community, fulfilling the school's mission to be 'a happy school where pupils are encouraged and challenged to reach their full academic and social potential.'

## Established strengths

- The school is exceptionally well led and managed and is constantly improving
- Christian values are lived out day by day;
- Positive relationships and excellent behaviour abound;
- Collective Worship and RE contribute strongly to pupils' personal and academic development.

## Focus for development

- Consistently use collaborative learning strategies to build on children's prior knowledge and understanding during Religious Education lessons.

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

The explicit promotion of Christian values such as trust, friendship and forgiveness across the whole curriculum has a significant impact on the personal development of every child at Walmsley. The children are cared for as individuals by all staff. High expectations together with a nurturing approach to personal development ensures that all children make outstanding progress across the curriculum. Learners have exceptionally good levels of self-esteem, confidence and independence.

Children are highly motivated, have high expectations of themselves and of each other and their behaviour is exemplary. All the children know that they are valued and special. The school is very effective in living out its Christian values in the wider community where it successfully provides memorable experiences to broaden and deepen the children's understanding of Christianity and enhances the connection between church and school.

The school environment is used very well to encourage spiritual development and an appreciation of God's creation. Most classrooms are stimulating and well-organised. The outdoor area is very well maintained and children enjoy spending time there for both quiet reflection and outdoor cooperative learning. High quality pupils' work, displayed so imaginatively throughout the school, together with beautifully resourced quiet spaces in all classrooms dedicated to prayer and reflection makes a major contribution to the spiritual development of all learners.

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

Collective worship occupies an important place in the life of the school. Excellent use is made of prayer, silence, reflection and music to nurture pupils' spiritual development. Pupils comment that school worship 'unites the school family', 'it makes you think about those less fortunate than ourselves' and 'reminds us about Jesus and his life on earth'. The worship is led by the Head teacher, by the children and staff as well as a weekly Eucharist service in church led by the Vicar. Acts of worship create an atmosphere of spiritual depth whilst still being relevant to the full age range of the school. Learners confirm that worship is important to everyone and appreciate the time of quiet it provides. Children enjoy the worship and express enthusiasm for it - especially singing. The regular affirmation of achievement in some assemblies promotes a feeling of inclusion. Pupils are very aware of Anglican traditions and experience collective worship that is very securely focused on Christian values. Acts of worship contribute very well to pupils' spiritual development because they start in a peaceful manner, due to calming music, candlelight, the sensitive use of silence and the outstanding behaviour of all pupils. Records confirm that whilst worship is largely based on Christian values and core Christian beliefs such as incarnation, salvation and the Trinity it also encompasses the connections and links between other major religions and Christianity. Children now play a part in formally evaluating the impact of worship on the school community and this is reflected in the worship themes that are visited during the course of the school year.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

The RE Coordinator is making sure that the curriculum remains relevant to the lives of all pupils. She has used her leadership time well to maximize her impact on provision around school. During a mixed Year 3 and 4 lesson, energetic teaching involved learners in reflecting on the story of Elizabeth Fry. High levels of engagement and thinking resulted in one child saying that 'during her life, Elizabeth was showing people what it means to live a life of humility as a Christian'. Religious Education lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. When asked what he liked about RE lessons, a boy responded that 'you have to give your own opinions on things'. Pupils discuss Christianity and other faiths openly and with respect. In response to the question 'What can we learn from the life of Jesus?' one child answered, 'I think the trust that Jesus had in God is very important', to which his friend added, 'I agree, but I think the trust that the disciples had in Jesus after his ascension into heaven is also really important'. This level of mature consideration and profound reflection was common throughout the day and underlines the way in which children are being drawn into a deeper exploration of ideas to take their learning on. As a consequence, pupils' progress and standards are high in the subject. Visits to the local church and the expertise of the vicar develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian faith and practice very well.

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

The leadership team has a clear vision for Walmsley School and successfully promotes the distinctive Christian nature of the school in all relevant school documentation. They have also fully addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection. Christian values are central to every aspect of school life and are lived out and articulated on a daily basis by all members of the school community. The head teacher's clear vision for the school as a Christian community together with her commitment to her school and her pupils is a key factor in the vision of the school becoming a reality in daily life. All governors and staff ably and enthusiastically support her. Recruitment and induction processes for new staff make clear the Christian character of the school. The school leadership team has a clear view of how it sees the school moving forward based on the analysis from the school self-evaluation. There is great enthusiasm and commitment by the leadership team to ensure the children at Walmsley have every opportunity to grow and develop as mature, knowledgeable, independent and caring citizens. All pupils are given the best possible life chances in a high quality learning environment where everyone is valued and nurtured. This develops self-confidence and pride. Parents are also active and valued members of the school community. This creates a real sense of belonging to a school family that knows each child exceedingly well and empowers every individual to become a self-confident, caring member of the community.

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