



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Barkisland Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Scammonden Rd

Barkisland

Halifax

HX4 0BD

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Calderdale

Dates of inspection: 17 May 2016

Date of last inspection: May 2011

School's unique reference number: 107552

Headteacher: Becky Schofield

Inspector's name and number: Lynne Gillions 662

School context

Barkisland Church of England Primary School has 191 pupils, mainly of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is close to the national average with children on Education, Health and Care Plans above average. Since the last inspection, the school has had significant changes in staffing including a new headteacher and deputy head.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barkisland Church of England Primary School are outstanding

- Christian values such as love, respect and koinonia are embedded into school life and help create a secure and challenging learning environment which enables children to reach standards above national averages and exhibit exemplary behaviour.
- The enthusiastic, visionary leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the governors and staff, provides a clear sense of direction which results in ongoing improvement.
- The strong links with the church enable pupils to understand the Christian view of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and link biblical teaching to their own experience.
- Pupils show respect for those with different faiths and for those with different expressions of the Christian faith, showing a mature understanding of diversity.

Areas to improve

- Ensure activities in religious education are differentiated to meet the needs of all learners and provide appropriate challenge for children of higher ability.
- Marking in religious education should focus more clearly on the learning objective and identify next steps.
- Develop children's capacity to ask big questions to deepen their understanding of faith.

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

The school has identified a set of values which correspond to the school name – believe, aspire, respect, koinonia, inclusive, success, love, achieve, nurture and dream. The school motto ‘We believe, we nurture, we succeed’ is displayed in the entrance to the school alongside ‘where we all belong to God’s flock’ and this sets the tone which prevails in the physical environment and in all areas of school life. These core values are recognised by all members of the school community and stakeholders speak of their impact. ‘This school is significantly different to a non-church school.’ ‘Koinonia taught me to include people who are lonely or left out of games.’ All children are given badges to remind them of these values and parents talk of them as ‘a continuous learning process’. School has high standards of progress and attainment which are consistently above national averages and the Christian values which the school embraces positively contribute to the learning and achievement of the pupils. Behaviour in school is outstanding and attendance is above national averages because children enjoy coming to school. They are happy in the school family and because they feel loved, secure and respected they are confident learners. Creativity is valued and music and art are important elements of the curriculum. Children are encouraged to explore spirituality in collective worship, religious education, in reflection areas and by visits from the Hand to Mouth team who provide special days where children experience a range of reflective activities. As a consequence, children are interested in spiritual matters and listen attentively to the views of others. They like to learn about other faiths and cultures and the special cultural days and the visits to other places of worship are developing their understanding and respect for people of other faiths and giving them a mature understanding of diversity. They also understand that Christianity is expressed in different ways. Some children have looked at the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Catholicism and when talking about the Baptist church they spontaneously linked baptism by immersion to Jesus being baptised by John the Baptist. Links with African schools and Fairtrade activities raise global awareness. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is strong. Relationships between all stakeholders are supportive and a reflection of the Christian values which are consistently promoted and which lead to an inspirational school community. ‘I smile every day I am in school.’

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a highly valued part of school life and a central expression of its Christian foundation. It engages the children and they clearly enjoy it. They listen attentively, use reflection and prayer times respectfully and sing beautifully. They particularly enjoy participating in demonstrations and drama and reading the prayers as evidenced in a well-led worship time on Pentecost. Children have an impressive understanding of the Christian view of God describing God as the father and creator, Jesus as being sent by God to save the world and the Holy Spirit as a source of power helping people to spread God’s word. They also have a good understanding of Anglican traditions and can describe the different seasons of the church year and their significance. They understand the significance of the Eucharist, recognising the symbolism of the bread and wine and linking it to the Last Supper. The church plays a significant role in developing children’s understanding through their leadership of collective worship in school and in special services in church. The after-school Wednesday Worship Group is run by the vicar, governors and volunteers from the church and provides a range of activities which help to give children a deeper understanding of biblical teaching. Children speak of the impact that collective worship has on their lives. One child spoke of the time that autism was a focus and said, ‘God believes we are all equal and special regardless of any disability. We all have the right to be loved just as Jesus loves us.’ Children recognise the importance of prayer to believers saying that it connects you with God and is a time to think what God has done to help you and others in the world. As well as prayers said during the day, they use the prayer boxes and reflection areas in classrooms to express their personal prayers. Pupils can become worship leaders. They take responsibility for different aspects of

collective worship, lead some worship themselves and obtain pupils' views on each act of worship. They value this responsibility saying it helps their confidence and 'helps me follow in the footsteps of Jesus'. Collective worship is planned by the headteacher in consultation with clergy and all teachers and a range of visitors from other denominations act as leaders. Collective worship is well monitored by pupils and governors and is discussed with staff and the full governing body.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education is seen as an important subject and standards are judged to be at least in line and sometimes higher than national expectations. A new curriculum has been introduced along with a new system of assessment. These have not yet had time to fully impact on the children but the school is on course to have an effective curriculum and a system of assessment in place which will provide an accurate measure of children's progress and attainment. There is evidence of creative teaching and learning taking place so children are developing a range of skills. In a Year 1 RE lesson, children were learning about Islam. The recent visit to a mosque had brought the topic alive and children talked enthusiastically about their visit and were able to apply what they had seen to their work in class. Year 5 children showed great maturity in looking at the topic of forgiveness and restoration. They demonstrated skills of analysis and interpretation and showed an excellent capacity to work co-operatively. A range of RE work is in evidence throughout the school. However, all year groups would benefit from greater differentiation in their lessons, particularly in challenging the more able pupils. As the new curriculum becomes established, marking should be more clearly focused on the lesson objective and children need more help with next steps in order to improve further. The school has already identified this need to improve the quality of marking as part of a recent book scrutiny. Children enjoy RE and have a curiosity and a love of learning. They have a good understanding of different faiths and show respect for the beliefs of others. They would benefit from more opportunities to formulate difficult, big questions which do not have easy answers as this would deepen their understanding of the complexities of faith. Links are made to other subjects and to the school's values and this gives a coherence to the children's experience and enhances their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The new subject leader, supported by an experienced colleague, has quickly and enthusiastically come to terms with her role and is putting measures in place which, once embedded, should lead to further improvement. She is effectively monitoring her subject to ensure these new measures are successful.

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

The school benefits from outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher has a clear vision and galvanizes the team to reach the highest standards. She is very well supported by senior leaders and governors who all approach their responsibilities with great dedication and professionalism. All leaders are committed to the core values and recognise the role they play in making this a distinctive church school. They acknowledge that Christian values are the foundations on which the school is built and the positive contribution they make to pupil attainment and behaviour. 'We provide an environment that is loving and trusting so children persevere.' Leaders ensure that the curriculum and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children are all informed by their Christian vision. Governors ensure the school is rigorously monitored and evaluated. They visit school regularly and individuals report back to the whole governing body so that everyone is kept informed. The school enjoys an excellent partnership with parents who describe the school as 'always supportive' and a parent of children, one of whom has special needs said, 'they are absolutely amazing, I feel so blessed my children are in this setting'. With the support of the church and involvement in village activities children are rooted in their local community. A network with other church schools provides a mutually supportive group for staff development.