



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

### Halton St Wilfrid's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Pennystone Road,  
Halton,  
Lancaster  
LA2 6QE

<b>Diocese:</b>	<b>Blackburn</b>
Local authority:	Lancaster
Dates of inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2014
Date of last inspection:	April 2009
School's unique reference number:	119529
Headteacher:	Claire Weymouth
Inspector's name and number:	Ruth Wall (548)

#### School context

St Wilfrid's is an average size primary school with 228 pupils on roll. The school serves the local village community and also draws children from Lancaster and the wider surrounding areas. Children are from a wide mix of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the number of children with statements for special educational needs. The school has achieved two church school distinctiveness awards since the previous inspection.

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

- A clear Christian vision is at the heart of all that the school does. The conviction with which this vision is promoted by senior leaders and shared by all members of the school community ensures the school's success in meeting the academic and spiritual needs of all children.
- Christian values are clearly expressed and demonstrated by children and staff and underpin the positive relationships between all members of the community and the excellent behaviour of the children.
- The quality of the learning environment enhances the children's high attainment and positive engagement in their studies.
- Relationships with the church are very strong in promoting a shared Christian vision for development and learning.

#### Areas to improve

- Provide experiences to broaden children's knowledge and understanding of faiths, other than Christianity, through visits to their places of worship.

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

The school's mission statement 'Love God, Love each other, Love learning' is evident on all documents and communication. This, together with its core Christian values, shapes the thinking of the school and is understood, articulated and embraced by all members of the school community. A teacher commented, 'Our Christian values always guide us and help us'. Parents said that during their initial school visit the headteacher makes very clear the Christian foundation and purpose of the school. They agreed with one parent who said, 'These are not just value statements, they are in the fabric of the school'. Acting as 'tour guides', children demonstrated maturity, quiet confidence and the pride they have in their school. Christian values, displayed artistically throughout the school, were pointed out by the children and their significance explained articulately. 'All the values are wrapped round with peace' and, 'love sums up all the values', were children's thoughts. High quality displays, together with areas well used for reflection and prayer, portray very well the message that the school has a strong Christian foundation. The Christian character of the school is clearly defined and effectively promoted so as to make a significant impact on the personal development and academic needs of the children. Assessment data is continually and expertly analysed by senior leadership who ensure that intervention strategies are put in place to support children in meeting challenging targets. Achievement and rates of progress are very good. The Christian character is also at the heart of all relationships. Behaviour is outstanding and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. Children are encouraged to show concern for world issues as part of the school's Christian service. The school achieved a church school distinctiveness award in recognition of their outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school is both distinctive in its Christian character and inclusive in its approach to diversity. Of particular note is the popular 'Inclusion Games Club' which uses wheelchair basketball to develop children's understanding of disability. The 'JAM' (Jesus and Me) after-school club is very popular and fully supports the Christian ethos of the school. This is a highly cohesive community where, a teacher explained, 'Every child is loved and valued, as is every adult. God's love is shown in all we do'.

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

Collective worship is a central feature of school life and is respected and enjoyed by all members of the school community including parents and governors. Children understand the threefold nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One child explained, 'We can't technically see the Holy Spirit but it's inside us to help us'. Collective worship is well planned and covers Christian themes with a strong emphasis on the 'Christian value of the month' and on important Christian festivals. This emphasis enables children to have a very good understanding of the nature of worship, the Christian faith and Anglican traditions and practice. The school has received a second church school distinctiveness award for significant development in pupil involvement in worship. The very effective children's 'Worship Team' demonstrate their enthusiasm and developing leadership skills, not only planning and leading worship, but in evaluating the quality of worship. This team take their task of rewarding stickers to other children for demonstrating Christian values very responsibly. Children benefit from a varied experience of worship led by a wide range of people including the vicar and other Christian groups. This variety serves to broaden their outlook of Christian worship. In the outstanding worship observed the teacher skilfully enabled Year 3 children to support Year 1 children in understanding the biblical teaching of giving thanks to God. This was done creatively through a variety of activities including interactive prayer stations where children reflected on and noted down their prayers on a banner. A favourite Christian song was sung with great energy and enthusiasm by children and staff. Children say formal prayers but also respond to opportunities to spontaneously express their own personal prayers. Parents appreciate the announcement of the Christian value of the month in the school newsletter as it enables them to discuss this with their children at home.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) is outstanding**

Children make extremely good progress in RE as is evidenced in portfolios and children's written work. The subject leader monitors the subject thoroughly using observations, book scrutiny and cross-checking of standards. This monitoring ensures that highly effective teaching and learning take place. Teachers have a shared commitment to improving standards and recognise RE as a core subject. Children have a thorough knowledge of the Bible and the life of Jesus. The study of other faiths and a global outlook are fully embedded in the school curriculum and explored in cross-curricular methods, including effective links with children in other countries. The school believes 'this gives children a deeper understanding of their own and other cultures and prepares them for life in our diverse global society'. Leaders acknowledge that children's knowledge and understanding of faiths, other than Christianity, would be further enhanced by visits to their places of worship. The school's monitoring and evaluation show that an excellent balance is achieved between learning about and learning from religion. Inspirational teaching and challenging questioning encourage children to think deeply about the subject matter. Reflecting on Jesus' last days a Reception child said, 'He (Jesus) would have felt sad because people were calling him names'. In a poem entitled 'First Prayer' a Year 5 child wrote, '...your tangled life goes up to God and he renews you giving you a better life'. In the Key Stage 2 lesson observed, a calm and trusting atmosphere was created as children studied questions about life and death. The teacher and children shared their personal feelings and thoughts, resulting in outstanding discussion, reflection, creative artwork and poetry. RE makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual development. This includes 'Spirituality Day', 'Bible Day' and 'Bible Week' where specially designed activities helped children to explore personal feelings through fun, reflection, stillness and prayer.

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

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are highly effective in articulating the distinctive Christian vision and ethos and in promoting and establishing that ethos throughout the school and beyond to the community. The headteacher's Christian faith is evident in all aspects of her leadership. Foundation governors are knowledgeable and have a clear understanding of their role. Priorities relating to the school as a church school are identified in the school improvement plan which is monitored effectively by governors. Issues raised at the previous inspection have been fully addressed. The governors' 'Vision and Values' committee affirm that their aim is to ensure Christian values are shared and understood by the school community and, 'to be the best we can be as a church school.' This committee was highly proactive in helping the school plan for the 'Holy Week' and 'Spirituality Day' activities. Leaders and governors have been successful in ensuring that the academic needs of all the children are met. In doing so they have recognised the importance of the school's strong Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. The vicar makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. She plays an important part in supporting RE and in leading worship. The leadership team work with staff to support career development. The headteacher supports teachers in applying for leadership positions in church schools. Great importance is attached to the leadership of RE and collective worship. Both are led with commitment and a genuine desire to continue to seek ways to improve further. The school is supported very effectively by the diocese. Children value their role in decision making through the school council. They say they feel comfortable in expressing their views and are confident that their suggestions are taken seriously. The school values its relationship with parents and seeks their views on a range of issues. A group of parents liaise with the headteacher to identify issues for prayer support. The chair of governors views prayers from parents and the church as 'a very spiritual help within our community'.

