



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St. Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Loughborough Road,
Shepshed
LE12 9DN

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Leicester

Local authority: Leicestershire

Date of inspection: 9 March 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 120159

Headteacher: Emma Pepper

Inspector's name and number: Wendy Wakefield Quality assurance: Rosemary Privett 321

School context

The school is average in size for a primary school. The proportion of children identified as having special educational needs is average. Almost all children are from white British backgrounds. Children transfer to the local high school at the end of Year 5. Whilst the school is currently maintained by the local authority, two years ago it became part of a local collaborative trust (BeSKiLD) and works closely with five other primary schools to ensure joint professional opportunities. Since the last inspection, staffing has remained stable and benefitted from a newly formed senior leadership team and a reconstituted governing body.

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

- The Christian vision and strong commitment of the headteacher, staff, governors, pupils and parents has ensured that the ethos and gospel values permeate all aspects of school life.
- A welcoming and worshipping Christian environment is evident which enables pupils to become confident and articulate learners who achieve well.
- The excellent partnerships with the church and community enrich the lives of all involved.
- The centrality of prayer and reflection and the high value placed on worship significantly contribute to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas to improve

- Extend the use of language and images linked to the Holy Trinity to support pupils in developing their understanding of this concept
- Develop evaluation of collective worship so that parents and pupils have more occasions to contribute to its on-going development.

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

Distinctive Christian values are made explicit and are deeply embedded in this fully inclusive school. These values including compassion, endurance, responsibility and trust are absorbed into its culture. They have created an environment where pupils are proud to belong, feel valued and achieve well. Key Stage 1 results have shown an upward trend over the past three years and in 2014/15 exceeded national expectation. Very good progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 and careful monitoring shows pupils to be on track for a good level of attainment at the end of Year 6 following their transfer to high school. Children talk enthusiastically about the values and about how they apply them to their own lives. One child talked about endurance meaning 'we keep on trying because Jesus doesn't want us to give up'. All members of the school community feel valued and listened to. Parents clearly believe that the life of the church, school and community are totally integrated. They describe a school led 'Pop UK' event held at the church as 'bringing the whole community together'. One parent said, 'The school really reinforces the Christian values, a living faith lived out in school'. Behaviour and relationships are excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong because the school sets very clear expectations. This results in an atmosphere of calm and respect throughout. Children speak with great pride about their school motto 'New day... endless possibilities,' linking it clearly to the teachings of Jesus. One child said, 'If we make a mistake or do something wrong, Jesus will forgive us and give us a chance to put it right. Our teachers say, new day new start. If we try really hard we can all do anything we put our minds to'. Governors are very involved in the school including monitoring the development plan and supporting class activities. They share the view of it being a Christian place of learning. This is seen in the way that children and staff speak of the importance of caring for others. They highlight a recent project to raise funds to support a school in northern England which had been devastated by the recent floods. The place of reflection and prayer, a priority since the last inspection, is now a strong thread that runs through the daily life of the school. As a result it greatly enhances the pupils' spiritual development. Each class has a reflection chair which is linked to one of the core values. These chairs are well used by the children as a place of calm and quiet where they can sit and think or pray. They often write prayers or positive comments about themselves and others which are then displayed. A time for reflection at the end of each day also allows children to consider their day and celebrate the achievement of others. Religious education [RE] makes a considerable contribution to the distinctive Christian character of the school. The school provides exceptionally well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of the pupils. This occurs in numerous ways from visits to places of worship to welcoming visitors from major world faith communities. They regularly talk about their values and festivals throughout the year. These alongside a very effective RE curriculum encourage children to understand diversity and show respect for those who may have beliefs different from their own.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

High quality and inclusive worship, based on the Bible and Christian teachings, has a place of major importance in the daily life of the school. It is an extension of the school's core purpose, which is highly focused on the development of the whole child. It is inspirational and valued by all members of the school community. Pupils have positive and respectful attitudes to the daily act of worship which is supported by a rich and stimulating environment. At the start of each act of worship pupils place a Bible, a cross and a candle on the worship table. This demonstrates the importance of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The school has correctly identified the need to develop further opportunities to discuss the Trinitarian nature of God, Through carefully planned and interactive themes, pupils are encouraged to engage with big questions. Their answers are thoughtful and mature. Props, discussion and reflection are skilfully used to convey a Christian message in a way that the children enjoy. This makes worship relevant and meaningful for them. Pupils and staff state that they enjoy this time of celebration one staff member said, 'It is crucial to our day, it is a time when we all come together as one big family'. A monthly achievement assembly is clearly linked to the school's core values. This enables pupils

to share and celebrate their own successes and those of others. One child gave an example of this where he had received a silver award for endurance in maths, he commented that, 'Jesus always expects us to try our best'. As a result of developments since the last inspection, children now regularly plan and lead worship. They speak animatedly about an 'Act of Worship Golden Time Club' where mixed age groups are able to plan and lead an assembly each month. Children enjoy these occasions when they are actively involved, and as a result, speak enthusiastically about worship. Parents enjoy attending worship led by the children both in school and in the church. These occasions celebrate pupils' work and achievements, as well as events in the Christian calendar. Worship is regularly led by visitors from a variety of settings including the SOaR project, an outreach group which takes the 'good news of Jesus Christ to children, young people and families in North Leicestershire'. The local minister and the church based family support worker also lead worship regularly, the children look forward to their visits. As a result of these visits, children can talk confidently about the meaning of key Christian festivals and beliefs. Prayer and reflection are now central to school life including collective worship. This enables pupils to speak with understanding about how prayer helps them talk with God. A Year 2 child said, 'We know we can pray anytime and anywhere and God will always listen to us. He knows what we need even when we don't say anything'. Although the impact of worship is monitored and evaluated by staff and governors the role of pupils and parents in the process is not yet embedded across the school.

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

The school is very well led and managed and the distinctive Christian character provides a clear framework for the school's future development. It is clear that the Christian values and a welcoming and worshipping environment have a strong impact on the lives, behaviour and achievement of children and indeed all stakeholders. A rich and varied curriculum is clearly underpinned by the distinctly Christian vision shared by leaders. This in turn has a strong impact on the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of learners. It also makes a strong contribution to the wellbeing, attendance, positive behaviour and attitudes of all pupils. Progress and achievement are very good. The headteacher commented, 'Our children have the right attitude and aspirations. As the values have become more embedded, we have seen much more of a 'can do' attitude'. The headteacher and governing body are especially proud of the mutually beneficial relationship with the church. This ensures that the school continues to develop as a church school at the heart of its community. This view is shared by parents and other community figures. Senior leaders plan very strategically to ensure that a strong Christian distinctiveness strand is at the heart of school improvement planning. Rigorous and extensive monitoring of actions by governors and the headteacher ensures continuous improvement. The very effective use of reflection chairs has come about as a direct result of this monitoring. Strategies to assess the effectiveness of the school as a church school have developed since the last inspection. Self-evaluation now plays a key part in the on-going improvement of the school and all members of the school community are involved. The work of the school council helps to nurture pupils as leaders. It was recently instrumental in gathering evidence and opinion which led to changes in provision for after school sports clubs. The RE leaders have brought about considerable improvements, by ensuring that all teachers are trained and supported to teach the subject well. They build up strong links with other local church schools through their involvement in the local collaborative trust and with the Diocese. The leadership of collective worship is good. The enthusiasm and commitment of the coordinator ensures that all stakeholders hold the act of worship in very high esteem. Senior leaders have correctly identified, however, that more formal systems to monitor collective worship are needed to secure continued improvement. All issues since the last inspection have been successfully addressed and good strategies for succession planning are now in place. This ensures the school's continued development as an effective church school.