

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Heaton St Barnabas Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Rossefield Road

Bradford

BD9 4DA

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Bradford

Dates of inspection: 8 December 2014

Date of last inspection: May 2010

School's unique reference number: 107321

Headteacher: Diane Smith

Inspector's name and number: Lynne Gillions 662

School context

Heaton St Barnabas Church of England Primary School is a two form entry primary school serving a mainly Pakistani community though other cultural backgrounds are present in the school. An above average number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. An average number of pupils are supported through school action and the proportion supported by school action plus or by statements is below average. In the last two years there has been a complete change of governing body and a new headteacher has been in post since the start of term.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness Heaton St Barnabas as a Church of England school are good

- The school provides a secure and welcoming environment where Christian values such as kindness, respect and honesty underpin all aspects of school life and where diversity is celebrated. The school takes great care to meet the needs of children as individuals and as a result children flourish and make good progress.
- The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders and the local church, provides enthusiastic and committed leadership in driving forward a shared vision grounded in Christian principles.
- Children's spiritual growth is fostered through a range of experiences which are sensitively presented, and encompass different faith backgrounds. This results in children having a high regard for each other and a respect for different cultures.

Areas to improve

- Further develop higher order skills in religious education by providing challenging activities for the more able and ensuring marking across school consistently addresses RE objectives.
- Establish a rigorous system of monitoring by governors which feeds into the School

Improvement Plan and leads to further development.

- Ensure reflection areas in classrooms encourage children to explore spiritual issues and provide opportunities for them to ask thought-provoking questions.

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

Christian values are at the heart of this school. They are recognised by all members of the school community as making a significant impact on school life. Children from different faiths know that the values that the school promotes such as kindness, respect and honesty are important in different religions and 'that makes us all feel special and happy'. They talked about respect being an important part of both Christianity and Islam. School has worked hard to make their values explicit and these are displayed on high quality posters along with their vision statement, 'Trusting in God, Realising Our Potential and Creating Our Future', statements which the whole school community discussed and agreed. The school motto, 'Unity in Diversity' perfectly sums up the atmosphere throughout school. This is an excellent example of a harmonious, multi-cultural school. Pupils have high levels of respect for diversity and appreciate each other's viewpoints. One child said, 'There is no fighting over religion or discrimination, we all get on well together and treat each other with respect.' Behaviour in school is very good and the Christian ethos is central to the school's success. This is coupled with Restorative Practice where peer mediators are used to help manage any problems that may occur between children. They are encouraged to reflect on their actions and to take responsibility for their own behaviour. As one child said, 'There is always a consequence if you make a good or bad choice.' Children exhibit a practical understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation. Standards in school are good and Christian values contribute to pupils' progress and attainment. Along with the Building Learning Power approach, they have helped raise pupils' aspirations and motivation. In its quest for continual improvement the school has identified three key drivers: spirituality, emotional awareness and broadening horizons and these influence all their initiatives. There are a range of strategies to support attendance and a parent engagement worker and two learning mentors support and encourage any families in need. There is a nurture room in school which provides a calm space if children need to talk something through with an adult. Staff have received training on developing spirituality and opportunities are identified throughout the curriculum and other areas of school life, for example the Hand to Mouth team come into school and help children explore personal spirituality. During the inspection, the team invited children to respond to a range of activities focused around creation and children responded very positively to the experience. The school environment reflects this emphasis on spirituality. Every classroom has an area for reflection. These could be further developed to create an interactive space where children could, for example, offer their responses to themes in collective worship or display their own big questions. The hall provides a focal point for Christian values with a special table, a prayer tree and relevant displays. In the shared area a display invited children's responses to some quotes from famous people. In response to Martin Luther King's 'Only in the darkness can you see the stars' one child said, 'You see, when you have got a problem you can always see the light somewhere'. Children's horizons are broadened through the Comenius project. Groups of children have visited Turkey, France and Sweden and there are plans to visit Austria in January 2015. Children return to school and share their experiences. School has also established a link with a rural school in Northumberland. These links help to enrich the children's understanding of the wider world beyond their own community. Pupils help raise funds for a number of charities including Children in Need, Crocus, Bradford Foodbank and the Children's Society.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a valued part of school life and is a major factor in developing the pupils' spirituality and drawing together the pupils as part of the school family. All stakeholders recognise its importance and one said that in this community 'God is on the agenda'. A governor said, 'The school successfully provides worship which is authentically Christian yet respects other faiths.' Children are able to access and participate in worship whilst maintaining the integrity of their own beliefs. Indeed children are very positive about collective worship and really enjoy taking an active part in it. In an act of worship focusing on messages, children were invited to bring out objects from a bag and explain their link to the theme. Others were dressed up as characters and this linked into the message of the angel to Mary and to the period of Advent. The use of visual images and the song Let There Be Peace On Earth gave all children a meaningful opportunity for personal reflection to which they responded well. Singing and prayers are also an important element of worship. Prayer is integral to school life with prayers being said at different points in the day. Pupils have opportunities to write their own prayers for prayer books, displays and the prayer tree and they appreciate the importance of prayer to believers. The school is supported by a prayer group of adults who meet weekly to pray for the school and for any specific issues that have been requested. Collective worship is planned by the headteacher in consultation with the vicar and all teaching staff deliver worship along with a number of visitors from other faith groups. A range of materials are used including biblical stories and some from other faiths. Celebrations are observed and festivals such as Christmas, Harvest and Easter are marked with special services in church. These are increasingly supported by parents who say they are warmly welcomed by the church and really enjoy attending. An Open the Book team also regularly perform dramatic representations of Bible stories which the children enjoy. The church plays an active role in supporting the school by delivering collective worship weekly, contributing to religious education and providing pastoral oversight for the school. The vicar described the school as 'wrapped around in prayer'. The recently formed worship team, made up of Key Stage 2 pupils, is creating more opportunities for children to become involved in planning, delivering and monitoring collective worship and they are very enthusiastic about the contributions they are making. Monitoring is undertaken regularly by staff and pupils. Governors attend some collective worship but there is scope for a more systematic approach in order to fully evaluate the contribution that it makes to the life of the school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education is viewed as a core subject and all stakeholders recognise the important role it plays in the education of the children. Standards of attainment are good and similar to those in other core subjects. Pupils are well aware of the importance of faith and their high respect for religious beliefs is commendable. They have a good understanding of the impact of faith on believers. Teaching and learning is good and religious education lessons include a range of creative activities including drama, hot seating, ICT, art work and story-telling. Children describe their lessons as 'fun', 'interesting', 'enjoyable' and 'creative'. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, children were given a range of activities to help build their understanding of the nativity story including re-enacting the story, interpreting the story through craft activities, naming the characters they found in a bed of straw and writing thought bubbles to show their empathy with the characters. In Key Stage 2, children were looking at the differences between carols and Christmas songs then analysing different carols to see what elements of the Christmas story they covered. In both classes, pupils were focused on the tasks and worked well with their peers. Good use is made across the school of success criteria grids which enable children's responses and achievement to be tracked in individual lessons. Marking is not consistent across the school and in some cases does not focus enough on RE objectives. Examples of differentiation were in evidence but there is scope to develop a wider range of higher order skills to stretch the more able. RE makes a very strong contribution to the Christian ethos of the school and to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the

pupils. It encourages a genuine respect for different faiths which is a strength of the school. In their quest for ongoing improvement, the co-ordinator and the headteacher regularly monitor books and then give feedback to staff. Assessments are undertaken and pupils are given levels so the school is able to track the performance of each cohort year on year. The co-ordinator meets with the link foundation governor to discuss RE and he then reports back to the governing body.

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

The school is led by the headteacher who enthusiastically embraces a clear vision, firmly rooted in Christian values, which reflects her own personal commitment. She is ably supported by senior leaders and governors who share the vision and who together have successfully communicated it to the whole school community. Central to that vision is their respect for people of other faiths who form a very large part of the school community. The leaders' capacity to embrace and respect this diversity is a strength of the school. The leadership team has undergone significant upheaval over the last two years with a new headteacher and governing body in place. They have made commendable efforts to come to terms with their roles and to lead continued improvement across the whole school. They undertake monitoring and evaluation activities and the foundation governor meets with the co-ordinators for RE and collective worship and submits a comprehensive annual report to the governing body. However, the role of governors would be even more effective if a planned, systematic range of monitoring activities focusing on the school's performance as a church school was put in place. This could then feed into the School Improvement Plan and become an embedded part of the overall school improvement agenda. Leaders ensure that collective worship and RE, and the curriculum are underpinned with Christian values and these are making a significant impact on behaviour, attitudes and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. The very strong partnership with the church makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual growth. Visitors from other Christian groups and other faiths help widen the pupils' understanding of their own community and beyond as do their partnerships with other schools. The school has good relationships with parents and takes on board their views through annual questionnaires and through the regular Positive Parents Meetings where open discussions take place. As a result of these discussions, maths workshops are being put in place for the parents. Leaders take opportunities to provide training for themselves and staff and resources are provided to support collective worship and RE. Leaders are fully committed to their vision and are leading the school on an upward trajectory.

SIAMS report Dec 2014 Heaton St Barnabas Church of England VA School, Bradford BD9 4DA