



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

High Hesket Church of England Primary School

High Hesket, Carlisle CA4 0HU

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current SIAMS inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Carlisle
Local authority: Cumbria
Date of inspection: 5 March 2015
Date of last inspection: 26 June 2010
School's unique reference number: 112248
Headteacher: Margaret Taylor
Inspector's name and number: Anne B. Woodcock 445



Diocese of Carlisle
Growing Disciples

School context

Situated between Carlisle and Penrith, the school serves a mainly rural community around the village of High Hesket. The school has grown significantly in recent months, necessitating a re-organisation of classes for January 2015. The vast majority of the 141 full-time and 27 part-time pupils are of White British heritage. They come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The number of children supported by the Pupil Premium grant is low and a lower than average number of pupils have additional needs. The headteacher is currently supporting a neighbouring school for part of the week. The assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of High Hesket Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The distinct Christian vision and direction of the headteacher and senior leaders inspires all that is achieved in school.
- Pupils' exemplary behaviour and attitudes to life and learning are firmly rooted in their understanding of the school's core Christian values.
- Strong, nurturing relationships, based on Christian love and respect, ensure the progress and well-being of all who work in the school.
- The strong culture of global awareness, established through the work on Fairtrade and global literacy, empowers pupils to contribute to change in the local and wider world.

Areas to improve

- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan and lead acts of collective worship to develop their understanding of the nature and purpose of worship.
- Develop the recording for the evaluation of collective worship by staff and visitors, to assess impact and inform future planning.

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

Christian values are firmly embedded. They inform the highly supportive and nurturing relationships which are immediately sensed by visitors. All members of the school family say that they feel valued and encouraged. Children consistently refer to the school motto, 'treat others as you would wish them to treat you', explaining that it comes from Luke's gospel. Pupils are highly motivated and eager to learn, saying, 'We have the best teachers who make lessons fun, help us and challenge us to improve.' Staff are committed to providing the very best opportunities for all children. This results in outstanding teaching which inspires and challenges all pupils. All children make good, often outstanding progress from their starting points. As a result, standards of attainment are very high. The rich, topic-based curriculum, enhanced by outdoor learning and special focus days, ably supports children's personal development and academic achievement. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because the school's Christian vision emphasises that all children are valued and nurtured. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is exceptional. Pupils are reflective and thoughtful. They value and use the indoor reflection area effectively because they are actively involved in designing the themes, such as the current one based on Lent. The strong focus on Fairtrade and global literacy provides many repeated opportunities for children to understand issues such as poverty and injustice. They show knowledge and compassion, discussing problems such as war and disease with a maturity beyond their years. RE makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' SMSC. They thoroughly enjoy RE lessons saying, 'Our lessons make us think about big, important questions like what we believe and how people worship God.' Through the study of faiths such as Islam and Buddhism, they come to understand and respect diverse cultures and beliefs.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important feature of the daily life of the school. Children value their worship experiences, explaining that it is 'a time to be silent and think'. Collective worship is inclusive and engaging. One year 5 pupil explained, 'You don't realise that you're learning until you think, wow how lucky we are! Also, it gives you clues as to what you need to do to become a better person.' Worship themes are firmly based on Bible teaching, Christian values and festivals. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the life of Jesus, explaining that they try to follow his example by helping others and being thankful for all the good things they have. They are beginning to develop an awareness of the Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils' understanding of Christian belief is supported by the vicar. He leads worship regularly and is engaged in monitoring the impact of collective worship. The church is used for special services at festival times such as Harvest and Christmas. These are much valued and extremely well-attended by parents and members of the community. Prayer is a key feature of the worship life of the school. Time is given for reflection within worship and at other times of the day. Children write and use their own prayers for use at different times of the day. They participate willingly in other aspects of worship, acting out stories, reading and responding to questions. The pupils' worship group helps to plan some events and makes suggestions as to how to improve worship. However, generally children have limited opportunities to regularly plan and lead acts of worship. They are involved in the evaluation of collective worship and their thoughts are insightful. However, although the impact of worship is evaluated through informal staff discussion, this does not always lead to ongoing improvement.

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

Distinct Christian values provide the foundation for all that is achieved in school. Christian love, trust and respect are evident in all relationships and are clearly apparent in the high levels of collaboration and excellent staff morale. The headteacher and senior leaders provide very

clear direction. This inspires staff and pupils to strive for excellence and achieve their personal best. Governors are well-informed. They support and challenge the work of the school, ensuring that church school issues are prioritised within school improvement planning. Governors are regular visitors. They monitor RE and collective worship robustly, ensuring that both are well-managed and resourced. Issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Excellent succession planning, resulting in the appointment of the assistant headteacher, has enabled the school to be very well-led whilst the headteacher supports a neighbouring school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. They are well-informed and engaged in the self-evaluation process, saying, 'There is a Christian ethos and emphasis on children's values and wellbeing.' Pupils accept responsibilities willingly and are eager to help those less fortunate than themselves by, for example, raising money for local and national charities. They successfully persuaded the local shop to sell only Fairtrade bananas. Links with the church have been strengthened and developed and are mutually supportive. Church and school work co-operatively. Church services are held in school and the school is supporting the church's fund raising project. Community links are strong. For example, the school provides a Harvest lunch for local residents and children entertain the elderly in a nursing home. Highly effective links with a school in Tanzania supports children's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith as well as extending their understanding of the world.

SIAMS report March 2015 High Hesket Church of England Primary School, High Hesket, Carlisle, Cumbria CA4 0HU