



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Holy Trinity Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Church Street
Clayhanger
Walsall
WS8 3EG

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Walsall
Dates of inspection: 11 June 2015
Date of last inspection: 15 June 2010
School's unique reference number: 104223
Headteacher: Judith Driver
Inspector's name and number: Rosemary Woodward 538

School context

Holy Trinity Church of England School is a popular and over-subscribed one form entry primary and nursery school with 236 pupils on roll. The school is housed in bright modern buildings on a small site in a close-knit and relatively affluent village community on the edge of Walsall. Almost all pupils live in the local area. The vast majority are White British and speak English as their first language. Very few are eligible for pupil premium. The school hall is also used as a church centre, Holy Trinity, within the parish of St James', Brownhills. The church office is also within the school building. The present headteacher is in her second year in post.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The leadership team who work together very effectively to realise their vision and embed Christian values and relationships in all areas of school life.
- Extremely strong links with the local church that powerfully enrich the school's spiritual life, and extends to embrace and benefit the local community.
- Lively and relevant worship that inspires and is valued by the whole school community.
- Appropriate and varied opportunities for prayer and reflection that underpin school life.
- The important role given to the regular school Eucharist, and its place within the wider Clayhanger community.

Areas to improve

- Build on the excellent foundations achieved by the worship group to encourage all pupils to take an increasingly active lead in planning and delivering worship
- Create opportunities within religious education (RE) lessons to explore the concepts and beliefs at the heart of each faith studied with appropriate depth and challenge.
- Generate opportunities across the curriculum to provide experiences and develop understanding of the diverse nature of the Christian faith and other faiths and cultures.

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

Holy Trinity is an extremely happy and caring community in which pupils feel valued and secure and are empowered to succeed. The Christian values of service, wisdom, respect, tolerance, forgiveness and friendship underpin all aspects of school life. They are clearly displayed around the school, alongside explicit related Bible verses. These verses deepen an awareness of the values' roots in Christian teaching. Pupils can talk confidently about the values' meaning and relevance to themselves and within their relationships with others. They also relate them clearly to Jesus' teaching. These values are modelled very well by staff who are passionate in their role of nurturing their pupils, while offering a fun and challenging curriculum. This loving care enables pupils to flourish and strive to achieve their full academic potential, with data confirming that pupils do indeed succeed. Behaviour of pupils is of the highest standard. The focus on the value of friendship and respect results in pupils' relationships being extremely respectful and inclusive. The school has very effective strategies for personal, spiritual and emotional development. The pupils' opinions are sought in many very positive ways. The school has effective ways of acting on these views, involving the pupils in new initiatives and so enabling their growth as independent spiritual beings. The school affirms success very well, with 'Golden Mentions' for pupils who have lived out Christian values during the week and 'Half-term Hero' awards for those who consistently demonstrate the current value. This helped pupils to recognise these values in each other, thanking them and nominating examples. There is very good implementation of 'What If Learning' training, an initiative to embed Christian values across the whole curriculum. The school environment is used extremely well to promote spiritual development. This is clearly demonstrated by the work of the 'pavilion peace-keepers' team who provide a welcoming space for prayer and reflection in a calm and supportive atmosphere. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions, and are taught to develop as responsible citizens, including taking opportunities for generosity and service. This is well exemplified by knitting club members who learn a skill while making blankets for others. They clearly articulate how their task links with the school's value of service. Parents and volunteers value the links between school, church and the local community very highly. Challenges relating to community cohesion are being tackled by establishing links with contrasting Walsall schools. These partnerships have the capacity to develop collaborative work and trust between pupils. RE lessons offer the chance for deeper study of Christianity and other faiths. A recent revision of the schools RE plans offers scope for more focussed questioning and understanding of the concepts that lie at the heart of belief, so that respect for a variety of faiths and cultures is fostered and enriched.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Well planned and relevant worship is central to school life for the Holy Trinity family and has a key role in developing the pupils' personal spirituality. Children are confident in discussing its importance and are able to discuss what worship has taught them. The school's Christian values are constantly referred to within worship times, alongside relevant Bible verses. The current value of service is clearly articulated as individuals becoming God's hands and feet on earth. Pupils have a very good understanding of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, explaining that God can be known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is strongly related to the name of the school and is very effectively demonstrated through a visual and reflective display of Trinity work by the pupils at the front of the worship area. Pupils and parents tell how Trinity Sunday was powerfully celebrated in a packed service with singing led by the school choir despite falling in a holiday. Older pupils confidently explain that Jesus' death and resurrection offers new life to believers. Pupils also know Jesus as teacher, miracle worker and story teller. Whole school, key stage and class groupings for worship ensure that content is relevant and age appropriate so that children can participate fully. Pupils very much enjoy singing and praise and clearly link the content of songs to the Christian message. They talk confidently about the Bible and can share stories that they know and enjoy, and something of their meaning. They also strongly value the chance to pray and reflect explaining that it '*Helps us to calm down*' and '*Shows God that we care*'.

Prayer underpins the life of the school, with many opportunities for worship within classrooms, hall and church areas supplemented by the reflective pavilion area created by thoughtful display, gentle music and the prayer tree. This contemplative and inter-active space is used by the whole school community, children and adults, including parents. Prayer and reflection are also seen as an important and integral part of staff and governor meetings. There are very effective strategies for evaluating worship in the school. Pupils are regularly consulted for their views by staff and governors and their opinions are then acted upon. A desire by pupils to be further involved in the planning and delivery of worship has led to the formation of a worship group. This is an important further step in enabling pupils to take more responsibility for their own spiritual development. Worship leaders (who wear their distinctive badges with pride) help to plan and lead worship with confidence. Their role includes leading the opening responsive prayers, honouring the Bible and lighting three Trinity candles in whole school worship, thus ensuring a very clear focus to this special time. They also take pride in taking part in drama and finding suitable pictures and music. However care needs to be taken that other pupils are also fully included at all times and that the excellent practice displayed by worship leaders does not become exclusive. The pupils' understanding of the Anglican tradition is strong because of the extremely strong partnership with the local church. This is particularly evident through celebrations of the Eucharist which includes pupils, following preparation classes. Pupils speak with great understanding and respect for this opportunity to worship, as well as special events such as baptism of pupils and 'Experience Easter'. They have a very good understanding of the principle Christian festivals, and are confident in using the Lord's prayer. The nature of the local community, however, means that, as yet, they have been offered few opportunities to explore the diversity of Christian worship in Great Britain and worldwide.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school as a community living out Christ's love and this is fully shared and endorsed by the whole staff team and governing body. Dedicated staff work hard to ensure that the vision becomes reality. The school's mission statement – 'Be the best that you can be' is explicitly linked with Jesus command to 'love one another as I have loved you'. The school's Christian values, strong church links and Christian foundations are clearly proclaimed in the school's self-evaluation documentation. Governors are very active within the life of the school, and are involved in the school's self-evaluation process and taking a role in strategic planning for its future. They also listen to the views of pupils, so they can discuss the impact of the school's Christian effectiveness with confidence. Staff are supported very effectively and given good opportunities to develop professionally, particularly as leadership is delegated very well. The 'Aspire' programme and diocesan 'Vision to lead' ensure that potential leaders are identified and empowered to gain confidence. 'Days of Reflection' offer a very supportive way for staff to move forward in their own spiritual journey. All staff are involved in leading worship and embedding the Christian values across the whole curriculum, with excellent guidance from the senior management team. The church works extremely closely with the school and is seen as an integral and important part of it. The vicar and many other church members actively participate in school life, and pastoral care for staff and families is given high priority. Pupils see the vicar as a trusted friend, happily sharing an affirming 'high five' with him. Parents speak extremely highly of the school's care and support, not only to pupils, but to the whole family. They affirm that every pupil is seen not just as a child but as a unique individual. Parents recognise the strong partnership between school, church and parents as the 'Holy Trinity family'. This is exemplified by stories of former pupils who miss the distinctive Christian character and care found at Holy Trinity when they leave, returning for support, including guidance with RE examinations. Many parents attend and highly value school worship events, particularly the celebration of Eucharist, in which they can share as a family. Ties with the Diocese are strong and staff and governors benefit from their training and resources.