



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christchurch Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Delph Road

Denshaw

Oldham

OL3 5RY

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Oldham

Date of inspection: 19th March 2014

Date of last inspection: 19th and 20th March 2009

School's unique reference number: 105693

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Callaghan

Inspector's name and number: Stephen Burrow

Inspector Number: 622

School context

Christchurch CE is a well below average sized primary school serving a rural area. The number of pupils eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils who need extra help is above average. The school has strong links with the local church community and has achieved the Activemark, Healthy School, Eco School and the Achievement for All Quality Lead status.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christchurch CE, as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The excellent relationships within the family of the school and the excellent behaviour and attitude of pupils are firmly based on their understanding of Christian values.
- Each child is highly valued and nurtured as an individual in a caring Christian environment enabling them to grow academically, spiritually and socially.
- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and excellent support from staff and governors demonstrates a clear Christian vision, which strongly promotes the Christian character and mission of the school.
- A strong partnership exists between the school and the church, nurturing relationships which support pupils and their families.
- A committed governing body plays a full and active part in developing the school's Christian life, especially through the Values and Beliefs committee.

Areas to improve

- Establish strategies for pupils to be more involved in the planning of worship themes to further enhance their involvement.
- Explore the setting up of an overseas link to further promote the awareness and

understanding of cultural and social issues in the wider community.

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

Christian values are explicitly expressed, deeply embedded and clearly understood by all members of the school family. Pupils talk confidently and knowledgeably about Christian values. Relationships throughout the school are excellent, nurturing and mutually supportive. One pupil stated that, 'One spark links us all together, our teachers make the relationships work.' At the heart of these relationships are the school's Christian values of Faith, Love and Hope. Pupils are able to make links between these values and the choices they make. One pupil commented that school was like one big family but that they didn't all live in the same house. The exciting and challenging religious education curriculum, together with the daily act of worship, ensures that pupils understand the roots of the values within the Christian faith. Pupils have great trust in and respect for their teachers saying, "They always make learning fun." As a result pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their attitudes very positive. They strive to meet the high expectations set by teachers who inspire them with creative ideas and challenges. All pupils, including those with additional needs, are very well-supported. As a result they make good progress and levels of attainment are above average. Pupils are articulate, enthusiastic and quietly confident. They work together within a calm, purposeful atmosphere, which encourages questioning and allows experimentation. The school's welcoming atmosphere and environment, Christian symbols, high quality displays of pupils' work in RE, worship and the well-used prayer garden, reflect the school's explicit Christian character. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. They have an excellent knowledge of the Christian faith that makes a significant contribution to their moral and social development. Pupils' cultural development is also outstanding. Religious education (RE) and cross-curricular topic work actively support pupils' personal development. They are respectful of cultures and beliefs other than their own, and have a growing awareness of the diversity of God's world and their place within it. Pupils enjoy raising money for charities such as Foodbank, Children in Need, British Heart Foundation and orphans from Thailand. The school recognises the need to further develop their charitable work and cultural links by investigating the possibility of setting up a link with a school in Namibia through the Manchester Diocesan links with the Diocese of Namibia.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school, it is the driver for the school's Christian values and has a strong Christian foundation. It is very well-planned with themes developed around the school's core values, festivals, the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. Pupils enjoy and highly value their worship experiences, both in school and in church. They particularly enjoy the singing and opportunities to read or act out a story in worship. They talk about their worship with confidence and enthusiasm, recognising times of reflection and their prayer life as being very important. One pupil said that it was a, 'Time for peace and a time to talk to God.' Another said that worship helped them to think about the right thing to do. Pupils show high levels of respect and reverence during worship. Prayer is a key and integral feature of worship life. In worship pupils know and say the Lord's Prayer and Grace, they write their own prayers, which are displayed in class they also use the school's prayer tree. These reflect a clear understanding of the value and use of prayer. Worship makes a significant contribution towards pupils' spiritual development as does the well used prayer/reflection garden in the school grounds. KS2 pupils are given responsibility, with guidance, for the planning and delivery of weekly worship, however, they do not have the opportunity to be involved in the planning and selection of topics. Monitoring and evaluation is rigorous and well structured, with pupils' views given a high profile, leading to important adjustments keeping the worship fresh, stimulating and inclusive. On the inspection day pupils led worship with the headteacher, on the theme of forgiveness. The worship was enhanced by a table with cross

and a candle, Year 6 pupils were responsible for the music and presentation on screen. All staff joined in, demonstrating genuine involvement and spiritual awareness. Children's awareness of Christianity as a worldwide faith is well embedded and there is a good understanding of the Christian concept of The Trinity. Visits to other places of worship, (Mosque, Synagogue and Hindu Temple) enhance pupils' appreciation of the beliefs and practices of other world faiths. The support provided by the local church is very good with the vicar leading worship each week, nurturing relationships which support pupils and their families. The school Christmas and Harvest services, held in church, are very well-attended and valued by parents and members of the community.

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

The headteacher and governors have a very clear Christian vision for the school, shared, agreed and lived by all members of the school family. The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher has had a very positive impact on the character and work of the school with her own Christian conviction guiding all aspects of her leadership. Leaders and governors ensure that both worship and RE meet statutory requirements consistently and confidently. They articulate, live out and promote their vision which is rooted in distinctively Christian values. Governors receive detailed information on developments in RE and worship from the headteacher. The way in which all members of the school family understand and live by their Christian values can be seen in the very strong, nurturing relationships, which permeate the school. Staff, governors, pupils and parents work together, collaborating and sharing expertise. The governors provide an excellent level of support, they understand that they need to provide a healthy challenge whilst maintaining a supportive relationship. They have a clear understanding of their role and are fully engaged in the self-evaluation process of the school. There is a values and beliefs committee, with a nominated governor, who liaises effectively with the headteacher ensuring that RE and collective worship remain as high priorities. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed with continuous improvement managed through rigorous and honest self-evaluation. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school saying that their children are happy and nurtured within a distinctly Christian environment. They say that communication between home and school is a strength. They feel well-informed and involved. "Bringing my children here was the best decision I made," explained one parent. A number of parents said that their children talked about the RE and worship topics at home. The school was thought by them to be a 'spiritual and moral compass,' providing pupils with skills and information to make up their own minds. Pupils are confident that their ideas and opinions are valued. They are proud of their achievements and take their responsibilities seriously. Older pupils act as mini-governors and as worship leaders. They have worked with the headteacher and values and beliefs governor to write an action plan and are involved in its implementation and review.