



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Barlow Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,

Millcross Lane,
Barlow,
Dronfield,
Derbyshire
S18 7TA

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: June 19th 2014

Date of last inspection: 22nd September 2008

School's unique reference number: 112798

Headteacher: Mr Jonathan Brookes

Inspector's name and number: Alison Woodhouse 777

School context

Barlow is a small primary school with a small sized hall which is also used as a library and teaching space. There are 77 pupils on roll, split into 4 classes. This academic year the school has an interim headteacher and a new substantive headteacher takes up their post in September 2014. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with 7.3 % of pupils eligible for free school meals. There are no pupils with a statement for special educational needs and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barlow Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian values of the school underpin all aspects of school life and are understood by both children and adults.
- The Christian values ensure a supportive and caring relationships between members of the school community and have a positive impact on the children's good behaviour.
- Christian distinctiveness is clearly known and reflected in the quality of the learning environment which enhances the children's attainment.

Areas to improve

- Promote Christian values of the school with the wider community so that there is a broader understanding of the work the school does.
- Formalise the evaluation of the impact of the school's Christian ethos and worship.
- Extend the work started this year under 'Learning and Growing in the grace of God' as the new Headteacher takes up the post in September 2014.

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

The interim headteacher has worked at an inspiring pace to ensure that the whole school community understands and supports the school's distinctiveness as a Church of England school. The reformulation of the school's mission statement and identity allowed for reflection and input from all stakeholders and resulted in the new statement 'Learning and Growing in the grace of God.' This new statement effectively describes the school's core purpose and this is now reflected on the school's updated website. The headteacher has worked hard to quickly establish positive relationships where Christian values are affirmed by all. The good relationships across the school community are evident in the way pupils care for one another and the respect they show for others throughout the school. The school's Christian distinctiveness is seen clearly around school. Examples of this are the newly developed 'big questions box,' and the spiritual garden area outside. In the 'big question box,' pupils have the opportunity to post questions for the vicar. This is then picked up and discussed when the vicar is in school. In order to develop the pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural worldwide faith the whole school recently visited Derby City and took part in a 'faith trail.' These are good practices but there has not been enough time yet to sufficiently embed them in order for them to have a significant impact on the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. The development point from the previous inspection 'to improve the links with the new incumbent' has been fully addressed as there are now strong links with the church, as the vicar is a regular visitor. Joint ideas for worship enhance the school's Christian character, and the values theme is shared by the vicar and the wider school community. The school and vicar actively work together to provide the children with good experiences of the Anglican traditions and the pupils now have an understanding of the colours of the church and the Holy Trinity. Standards in religious education (RE) have been a focus for the headteacher and the teaching of RE is shown to be at least good from recent monitoring. Quotes from pupils questionnaires such as 'we learn about Jesus,' and 'our new reflection garden is a new place of worship,' indicate that the RE curriculum contributes to pupil's spiritual development. The new Christian vision is supporting pupils' eagerness to attend school as attendance continues to be well-above national average and internal tracking data indicates achievement is improving since the last Ofsted inspection. Information from a parental questionnaire shows that most parents understand and support the school's distinctiveness.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The strategic planning of collective worship is good, with clear plans to follow the church calendar and deliver the daily act of collective worship in a variety of ways. The school is well supported by the vicar who leads collective worship both in school and in church. Recent work in church on the church calendar has meant all pupils are gaining a better understanding of Anglican traditions. Pupils have a good understanding of the Holy Trinity and 'notations of three' have been developed by teachers to support this understanding in every classroom. The school hall is smaller than average making it a challenge to accommodate the whole school easily. However it has a strong focus on collective worship which reflects the current theme on values and it is clear that this new focus is having a positive impact on the school community. Since September 2013 pupils are involved as the 'collective worship crew.' This has addressed the previous development point 'to improve the creative contribution made by pupils in the planning and delivery of collective worship.' This team, meet regularly with the collective worship coordinator to evaluate collective worship and offer their ideas. The collective worship crew lead worship at least once a term. They spoke enthusiastically about how they plan the worship in the hall and how they take it in turns to set things up. Behaviour in worship is good and it is clear that the new buddy system is having a positive impact here. The buddy system in worship means younger children are welcomed into worship by their older peers, something that clearly all the children enjoy. The pupils were very keen to share the 'spiritual garden' and how it links with the values they have discussed during collective worship. The school has taken steps to work with other schools to support the development

of outstanding collective worship. Currently staff only attend collective worship once a week for the 'celebration' worship on a Friday.

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

The interim headteacher has worked swiftly, in a short space of time to secure a more confident Christian identity for the school. This has ensured that the school's vision is rooted in its chosen and distinct Christian values which underpin all aspects of school life. The governors have played a key role in understanding their school as a church school and this is evidenced by their involvement in writing the school self-evaluation (SSE). Succession planning by the governors for a substantive headteacher has been rigorous as they are determined to ensure 'Learning and growing in the grace of God,' will be their core purpose and shared by the school and wider community. Governors regularly visit the school to informally evaluate school life. There is appropriate provision for all staff to benefit from continuing professional development opportunities including working with other local schools. The RE coordinator supports staff development and there have been several moderations of standards in RE. Assessment is a key part of standards in RE and within lessons this is done through related success criteria and levelled pieces of work. Every child's achievement and progress is tracked and monitored enabling leaders to discuss how pupils progress in this key area. In leading collective worship the coordinator has ensured clearly planned termly themes are shared across the whole school. The themes ensure explicit, frequent links to the Bible. The impact on the collective worship crew and other pupils is evidenced in pupils' positive response and discussions around the worship themes. Good links exist between the school and its parents and carers, the Diocese, the local church and the local community. The impact of this is a very positive working atmosphere. The website has recently been updated and now confidently promotes the school as a Church of England school. Questionnaires to parents and pupils have been carefully analysed and acted upon. The school is now well placed to keep monitoring and evaluation of the school as an Anglican school high on the agenda.

SIAMS report [June 2014] [Barlow Church of England (VC) Primary School, Millcross Lane, Barlow, Dronfield, Derbyshire.] [SI8 7TA]