



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Winster Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Wensley Road
Winster
Matlock
DE4 2DH

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Date of inspection: 9 October 2014

Date of last inspection: 7 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 112863

Headteacher: Mrs Sharon Slack

Inspector's name and number: Gail Goodman 571

School context

Winster Church of England VC Primary School is a two class, village school with 31 pupils, serving a community to the north west of Matlock. The pupil population is wholly from white British backgrounds, drawn from Winster and the surrounding rural areas. Free school meal entitlement is very low. No children are in receipt of a special educational needs statement. Attendance and punctuality at the school are very good. Since the last inspection all staff positions are new, including the headteacher, who took up post in January 2013. The school does not have a hall, and the parish church is a ten minute walk away for pupils across the village.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Winster Church of England Voluntary Controlled School as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian vision and inspiring leadership of the headteacher is wholly supported by staff, governors and the whole school community.
- Pupils are valued, nurtured and encouraged to flourish, within a distinctive Christian environment and, as a consequence, behaviour is good.
- Christian values have a clear impact on learners' personal development and on their academic achievement.
- Links with the parish church are strong, and families value the care, support and guidance that the school offers.

Areas to improve

- Increase pupils' knowledge of, and confidence in, the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship, including prayer, in order to use their skills and enthusiasm to the full.
- Extend opportunities to develop learners' knowledge of other faiths and cultures as preparation for life in a diverse society.
- Provide opportunities within the school building and grounds to promote the Christian

distinctiveness of the school, and places for pupils to pray and reflect.

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

The shared Christian vision permeates all aspects of school life and can be articulated by all stakeholders. This vision was established following challenging times and a complete change of teaching staff, including the headteacher, less than two years ago. The school successfully upholds its vision statement, as 'children, staff and parents working together in a caring, inclusive community, with Christian values, that is open, stimulating and safe'. The distinctively Christian values, including trust, generosity, friendship and wisdom, provide foundations for teaching, learning, behaviour and good relationships in the school. This results in pupils' high standards of achievement and attendance with no exclusions, to date. All pupils' behaviour is very good and they are developing into well rounded, respectful citizens. Pupils say they are well supported by their teachers and enjoy coming to school, enabling them to achieve well, both academically and in their overall development. They know and use school rules well, enabling a well ordered and kind learning community in which children do their best. Where pupils need extra help, one to one mentoring is provided and all learners, including those with special educational needs, are treated with love and respect, reinforcing the Christian values of justice and endurance. All staff, are described, by parents, as 'very approachable' and 'know their children well', and all issues and concerns are dealt with swiftly. The school plays a pivotal role at the heart of the community that it serves, and families value the sense of support and guidance given. Religious Education (RE) has a significant impact on all learners' spiritual development, as evidenced in their active involvement in discussion and willingness to ask questions, demonstrating insight and a deepening of their thinking of faith issues. Pupils also actively support several charities, recognising that they can make a difference, locally, nationally and globally. Learners' awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is at an early stage of development but is helped by links with an Italian school and a connection with an inner city school in London. Pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is limited, but increasing. In this way, the Christian character of the school is readily enhanced as all learners continue to show respect for people of faith, whatever their religion. There is an excellent link with the church and the vicar is welcomed into school on a regular basis, both in a teaching and pastoral role.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a focal point of the school's daily life. It is planned by the headteacher and is based on the school's Christian values. Full emphasis is also given to the seasons and celebrations of the Christian calendar. Learners enjoy collective worship, feeling valued and participate in some acts of worship, and want to be fully involved in planning, delivery and evaluation. They appreciate the quiet given over to reflection, and are beginning to write, and share, their own prayers. Prayer is not evident in other places of school life, and so pupils' spiritual development is not being fully attended to. Pupils say their favourite part of collective worship is the 'singing and Bible stories' and they can recall many Bible stories and have some knowledge of the life of Jesus. However, their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is limited. Daily collective worship involves a quiet and respectful atmosphere with music, the lighting of a candle to aid reflection and the opportunity for learners to ask questions and share in their daily praise. All pupils sing with enthusiasm and much respect, demonstrating their understanding of this time spent together in God's presence. The school logo depicts a lighted lead miner's lamp and one Year 2 pupil explained the significance in that 'Jesus said, I am the Light of the World'. She happily recalled the link between the logo and her clear understanding of Jesus' message from the Bible. Parents and pupils attend St John the Baptist Church for special celebrations, including Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Leavers' Assembly, thereby strengthening links between school and the church community. The vicar is a regular visitor to school, and ensures pupils are aware of the church year and Anglican practices. All learners understand they belong to a wider worshipping community because of

their involvement with three other local cluster schools and shared collective worship. Indeed, the vicar comments that 'children ministering to children is a powerful witness'.

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

The headteacher has a clear and distinctive Christian vision for the school, building on the legacy of the interim headteacher, which is well supported by parents and governors. Whole school planning for continuing staff development, and new recruitment of all teaching staff, are beginning to impact on the school as a distinctively church school. The school is confident and proud of being a church school as seen on the school's website and in the weekly newsletter to parents. The impact of how Christian values influence the lives of all learners is something that parents appreciate. They speak warmly of the school's caring ethos describing how older pupils enjoy looking after younger ones, and that 'the school feels inclusive and friendly'. Parents are proud of the school, speaking highly of the school's pastoral and inclusive care of all pupils which is the result of the staff's commitment to the Christian ethos. They feel welcomed and contribute fully to school life so that all learners benefit, for example from the supportive PTFA group that raises funds and encourages community involvement. The leadership and management team, with a strong commitment and effectiveness from all staff, has ensured there is a clear purpose to the way the school is moving forward, as a church school. All staff, governors and pupils aim to live the Christian values which are critical in establishing a pupil-centred ethos. The governors know the school well and foundation governors demonstrate strong commitment between church, community and school, and have supported the hard work of making the school distinctively Christian. The chair of governors explained that there is now 'a strong ethos in school underpinned by the Christian views of the headteacher and all staff'. Governors make the most of any support and training given by the school or diocese. As a result, they are fulfilling their roles, monitoring and evaluating all areas of the curriculum, thereby affording rigour and continued progress. RE is well planned and evaluated by the subject leader. She ensures that RE is given its core status within the curriculum, thereby continually developing the school's Christian ethos. The headteacher has established a positive relationship with three other local schools in the area, resulting in joint services, events and activities amongst the cluster. This ensures all pupils benefit from a sense of wider Christian family links. Partnerships with the church family, parents and local and wider communities are flourishing, and mutually beneficial, reinforcing a 'sense of togetherness and support in the school', as explained by one parent. The vicar, particularly, comments that 'within two years this is a happy school, with a deep-rooted Christian sense of joy'. He sees the relationship with the church and school as one where 'children are engaged in that spiritual dimension now, and this can be closely and clearly assigned to the headteacher'. Winster Church of England School has worked hard to address issues raised by the previous inspection, and now puts all learners at the heart of its mission as a church school.

SIAMS report October 2014 Winster CE VC School, Winster, Derbys, DE4 2DH