



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Stoney Middleton Church of England (VC) Primary School

High Street, Stoney Middleton
Hope Valley, Derbyshire S32 4TL

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 27 November, 2014

Date of last inspection: March, 2011

School's unique reference number: 112858

Headteacher: Patricia Barnett

Inspector's name and number: Kerry Palmer (60)

School context

Stoney Middleton is an exceptionally small, long established, rural village school. Children, who are predominantly of white British heritage, come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Around 25% have some special need and/or are eligible for free school meals. The historic buildings has been well adapted to provide a spacious and well equipped learning environment. The current acting headteacher was originally appointed as assistant headteacher in 2011, sharing leadership responsibility with an executive headteacher, whilst continuing to teach a class for half the school week. She took full responsibility for school leadership in September 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stoney Middleton as a Church of England school are good

- Committed Christian leadership which treasures every child as a gift from God ensuring the best education for all.
- Highly professional, dedicated staff who hold Christian values at the centre of their work so that children achieve well, are happy and safe.
- Excellent, Christ centred, collective worship which is recognised by all as central to school life.

Areas to improve

- In partnership with stakeholders, review the school's mission statement and aims so as to give due prominence to the school's Christian foundation.
- Explore strategies to widen the children's experience of diverse cultures and the world-wide church in order to deepen awareness and respect.

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

All aspects of school life are underpinned by its church school ethos, as the children's entrance

display announce, 'following in His footsteps'. Christian values of trust and endurance promote determination and enthusiasm amongst children and staff alike, ensuring that children of all abilities make good or better progress and levels of achievement are above national averages. This is an inclusive school, parents of a child who had transferred from another school spoke warmly of the welcome and professional support offered to their child 'she's come on so well and is much more confident'. Staff successfully deliver a well differentiated, personalised learning programme which focusses on individual needs and maximises progress. Relationships amongst all in the school community are open, positive and mutually supportive. Christian forgiveness and reconciliation are at the core of the school's very effective behaviour policy. Older children naturally support those younger; they all behave very well at work and play. Careful consideration has been given to embedding effective spiritual development opportunities throughout the new curriculum. This, along with religious education (RE) which connects with children's lives, inspirational collective worship and a wide range of enrichment activities are a very positive influence on the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of children who are hardworking, confident, feel safe and are happy to be at school. This is illustrated by attendance levels well above national averages. The small school, rural context of the children's education is broadened by regular sessions with a neighbouring school, visits and enrichment activities including a talk from a parent from another faith. However, there are insufficient activities to help children appreciate their place in a diverse, multi-cultural country and world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is at the centre of school life and promotes Christian action in children's lives. They say that the focus on Bible stories 'how Jesus taught us to live', and prayer times help them at school and home. Children remember and use school prayers, they appreciate opportunities to reflect and offer their personal prayers in different settings. A variety of strategies and approaches are used in a well-planned programme focussing on half-termly 'Values for Life'. The Good Samaritan illustrated compassion, recognised by the children in examples of kindness in their own lives. Celebration worship praises achievements which recognise God's unique gifts to each individual. Children often play a full part in preparing and delivering worship. An evaluation book has been introduced since the last inspection where some staff and children record the impact of collective worship and contribute to improvements. Festival services are held in St Martins' Parish Church, supported by large numbers of families and friends from the parish. Whilst they speak of 'a moving atmosphere' there is currently insufficient opportunity for parents and carers to share school worship or give considered feedback on its impact. Church visits also help children gain insight into Anglican tradition and the church calendar. There is regular reference to the Trinity in worship and RE so children have some understanding of God in three persons. Since the last inspection, regular monitoring reports on RE and collective worship by foundation governors are submitted to the governing body for discussion and to support improvement planning.

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

The headteacher, in partnership with staff and governors work as a collaborative team to successfully promote a school that celebrates Christian values. However, this fact is not given sufficient prominence in the prospectus, on the school website or evident in the mission statement or school aims. Again, Christian distinctiveness is also not evident in key school policy documents. Governors know the school well. They are clear that the school's Church foundation underpins it's striving for academic achievement. A governor commented 'the children have a conscience'. The school's self-evaluation is accurate but the review of Christian distinctiveness is not embedded in the governors' broader cycle of school evaluation. Governors are now receiving more relevant information and offering healthy challenge to school leaders. Professional development is actively promoted and responsibilities delegated. A teacher has recently become the very effective leader for RE and collective worship. She has

introduced the new RE syllabus which focusses on Big Questions, successfully promoting reflection and spiritual development which was shown by one class pondering 'What's Heaven like?'. Parents hold the school and staff in high esteem, valuing its inclusive, warm, family atmosphere and the hardworking, professional commitment of all staff who know each child so well. Discussing values, they spoke of 'a lovely atmosphere, and 'a sound foundation for life'. Although, they did not articulate the Christian basis for these values, 100% of parents responding to a school questionnaire, agreed or strongly agreed that being a church school was important. Parents actively support the school and its many community and charitable activities such as Children in Need, well dressings and Christmas fair. The active involvement of the recently retired vicar is sorely missed. Both school and parish see the potential for developing closer active ties. Recently, children's drawings of St Martin's Church were used to illustrate parish circulars. RE and collective worship exceed statutory requirements, there has been significant progress since the last inspection and the potential for further positive development of Christian distinctiveness is excellent.

SIAMS report November 2014 Stoney Middleton CofE Primary School, Derbyshire S32 4TL