



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Wirksworth Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Infant School

Greenway Croft
Wirksworth
Derbyshire
DE4 4FG

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 7th May 2015

Date of last inspection: 11th June 2010

School's unique reference number: 112864

Headteacher: Joanne Poyser

Inspector's name and number: Louise Patterson (310)

School context

The school is a small infant school which has been part of a Federation with Wirksworth Infant School since 2004. The headteacher and governing body share responsibility for both schools. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds. The school is currently in the midst of major building works. A new classroom to house the Foundation Stage children is being built on the site of a classroom which was demolished. This, along with other works being undertaken in the main building at the same time, has caused considerable disruption to the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wirksworth Church of England VC Infant School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Pupils are extremely well cared for and behave very well. They can articulate the meaning of the school rules which are based on Christian values. These have a very positive impact on the school as a whole.
- The holistic, all inclusive approach to the church school ethos and the spiritual dimension greatly enriches the Christian life of the school.
- The headteacher and Governing Body, along with the staff, are passionate about the retention and development of the Christian ethos.

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

The school's ethos, relationship with the local church community and treatment of every child as a child of God make it very clear that the life and work of the school is firmly rooted in Christian values. Even though there is currently considerable disruption due to building work, Christian values are being lived out and continue to have a very positive impact on the whole school community. It manifests in such areas as the quality of care and respect for each other, the behaviour of pupils and high quality classroom practice. Pupils are able to articulate what it means for them to go to a church school, saying such things as 'it's about thinking about God and Jesus' and 'we get to know about Pentecost, it's the church's birthday'. Pupil attainment is above national averages, which is a reflection of the quality of the attention to the needs of the individual and the teachers' commitment to the school as a Christian institution. These and non-academic achievements are celebrated in a range of ways which both pupils and parents greatly appreciate. Attendance is high and pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and that they feel very safe and well cared for. Religious education is given a high priority in the school. Lesson observations by the head teacher, along with regular monitoring and evaluation, indicate a well delivered and engaging area of the curriculum which is having a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of both pupils and staff. The strong team approach is indicative of the highly positive and supportive staff team. Adults within the school are providing excellent role models of hard work, care and love of the individual child. This results in pupils who are very well behaved and have a very positive attitude towards the school as a Christian community. There is a very mutually supportive relationship with the local church. Pupils visit the church on a regular basis for both education and worship, which they enjoy immensely. Local clergy are familiar figures to pupils who say that they 'say hello in town because we know them'. The links with the church, school and community are an outstanding feature of the school. Parents speak very highly of the school as a church school. They say such things as 'there is a real feeling of Christian values especially care', 'it makes us really comfortable with the churches' and 'Christianity is underneath it all'. They say that they are kept very well informed about their child and school events and really appreciate that they are 'really lucky' to have an outstanding church school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Worship plays a central part in the life of the school which has a positive impact on both staff and pupils. There are many opportunities for the development of the spiritual dimension such as prayers and periods of quiet reflection being clearly in evidence. Pupils commented that they enjoy times in worship to be 'still and listen'. There are often discussions about areas raised in worship followed up in class. This creates opportunities for pupils to talk about any issues or questions they may have, ensuring a deeper understanding of worship and the spiritual dimension. Prayer is a strong feature of the school with prayers being said at times throughout the day. Pupils enjoy and take pride in the opportunities to lead prayers in worship and at other times. Christian worship is meticulously planned by the headteacher, who very ably coordinates both worship and religious education, alongside staff, governors and clergy. Staff have been fully involved in development of the overview and the format for worship and consequently all are happy to deliver and attend worship on a regular basis. There is regular and effective monitoring of worship by Foundation Governors with areas for development having been built in to action plans or the School Development Plan. Worship offers a variety of opportunities and approaches which are taken up enthusiastically. Visitors follow the school's planning for worship thus creating a coherent and cohesive whole. Very well attended worship takes place in the church on a regular basis which is enhancing the appreciation and understanding of Christian practice. There is agreement from all involved in these services that they are important and greatly enhance the Christian dimension of the school. Through careful monitoring the school has a clear picture of current practice and experience within worship and therefore has a succinct plan for future consideration.

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

The school leadership has a very clear Christian vision for the school which is actively supported by Foundation Governors and staff who are fully committed to all that involves including accurate and insightful self-evaluation and the continuous pursuit of excellence. With this in mind, the current vision is under review by all members of the school community. As the headteacher commented 'I just can't imagine not being a church school - it's just second nature'. The whole school community understands the importance and relevance of the Christian foundation of the school. As a pupil commented 'our name's got CE in it and that means Church of England - so we can praise God'. The school values the outstanding relationship it has with parents. Parents are highly complementary about the leadership and management of the school and the wide range of experiences their children get there, academically, spiritually and personally. They commented 'I love the personal touches with all the families - they know everybody' and 'I always feel welcome and school fills the gaps'. The headteacher and Foundation Governors regularly attend appropriate training delivered by the diocese which impacts directly on the quality of input they have to the distinctiveness of this outstanding church school. Foundation Governors are acutely aware of their role within the wider Governing body and are tenacious in their promotion of the Christian distinctiveness both within meetings and school. As part of their monitoring role the headteacher reports termly to the Governing body about RE and worship. Christian values, are lived out as part of the everyday life of the school. Relationships with the local church are very effectively promoted and developed by the senior leadership of the school and local clergy resulting in very productive and mutually supportive links. This is also true of the town community. Strategic planning places the church school distinctiveness at its heart with all development plans referring specifically to the church school status. The school has all the elements in place to ensure that the focus on the distinctiveness and effectiveness of its' Christian foundation continue to thrive and develop into the future.

SIAMS report May 2015 Wirksworth Church of England (VC) Infant School, Derbyshire, DE4 4FG