



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Barlow Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Park Road
Barlow
Selby
YO8 8ES

Diocese: York

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Date of inspection: 17th October 2014

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 121548

Headteacher: John Donnelly

Inspector's name and number: Paul Bramley 326

School context

Positioned on the outskirts of Selby, Barlow Church of England Primary school serves the local village and community. The school has 56 pupils and is therefore much smaller than the average-sized primary school. All of the children are of White British heritage. The number of children with special educational needs is below average, and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is well below average. Accommodation at the school is limiting. The addition of a new classroom and group room have improved the situation for the school since the last inspection.

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

- Its Christian values impact positively on the lives of children both within and beyond the school because of the desire to support the whole child.
- The Christian ethos group has effectively evaluated and developed the school's vision and values producing a good sense of community and identity.
- Excellent links are established with the church and local community ensuring such links are mutual and beneficial.

Areas to improve

- Develop areas for spiritual reflection within the school grounds in order to provide increased opportunities for children to pray and reflect.
- Ensure pupils contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship so that they feel further involved in the planning process.



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

Strong leadership and a collective vision shared by the headteacher, governors, church and school, ensure that the Christian ethos is at the very centre of this school. Parents comment on the 'different spirit' evident, in comparison to other schools they know, and how Christian values are 'at the very heart of the school'. Achievement at the school is good, with good and sometimes excellent progress being made by children. The last Ofsted report and local authority performance data reviews both evidence this fact. Since the last inspection much has been achieved to ensure that Barlow's profile as a Church of England primary school is celebrated and developed. The school is now celebrating its church school status via banners outside of school, a new strap line, and a values tree, all clearly articulating its distinctly Christian nature. The links with the church are very strong and the whole community praises the involvement and contribution of the present incumbent. The vicar is described as 'inspirational' and 'unique' by both parents and children. Parents comment on how 'delighted' they are with the school and reflect on how the school's values impact positively at home. One parent governor relates how his son on his first visit to secondary school 'wants to see the school chapel before any other room'. Another comments on a theological discussion around the dining table inspired by a talk at school. The discussion focussing on the gospel message of 'God providing a room for everyone'. Such openness can support children and their families in times of bereavement. Children openly enjoy school, resulting in outstanding attendance and behaviour. The atmosphere of still reflection is skilfully created by one teacher via music and quiet interaction. Children consider challenging concepts. For example, as to why people might undertake a pilgrimage in silence. 'They might want to be closer to their god', suggests one pupil; 'they are praying inside their head and do not wish to be disturbed', comments another. Such thoughts demonstrate the confidence to engage and depth of thinking encouraged at the school. The school is very aware of the challenge they face living in a mono-cultural area. They seek out good opportunities to address this issue. For example, children are aware of other religions through visits to such as the local Islamic museum. Global awareness is good and actively encouraged by governors, evidenced by the fact that they are supporting a member of staff's visit to the Philippines to work in schools. Areas for spiritual reflection are evident in classrooms as well as in such materials as the 'Kindness Book' where children comment on the thoughtfulness of their peers. Opportunities for reflection in the school's grounds are limited. The creation of such areas feature in the school's development plan in order to nurture children's spiritual development and are welcomed by the children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

A good collective worship policy underpins the work of this school. Daily acts of worship take place with all staff contributing to their delivery along with the local priest and children. The worship is at times inspirational. Planning is thorough, with Anglican symbolism and practice evident via the use of the candle, Bible, and the liturgical colours. Planning follows the church calendar. Learners do have some understanding of The Holy Trinity. For example, during discussion older children discuss the concept of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one saying 'It is like they are one'. The school involves Key Stage 2 children in the planning of worship once per term, giving them a sense of ownership and commitment. Children comment that they would enjoy the opportunity to become further involved, for example through evaluating acts of worship. This is something the vicar and staff all identify as constructive and helpful. Parents



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express their enjoyment at visiting regularly to participate in worship, one describing the experience as 'a joy'. Children totally engage with worship and are enthralled by the vicar's approach to harvest. Children respond to the lighting of the candle to commence worship, acknowledging that 'Jesus is the Light of the World.' Children discuss how their talents develop at the school with both God's and the school's support. For example, through their planning and delivery of acts of worship and through their charity work with the local community. Children and staff pray in a totally inclusive manner with the vicar inviting children to pray. Many contribute, saying 'hello to God', and demonstrating through their choice of prayers the Christian values lived out at the school. Prayers for 'the poorly', for 'peace' and for 'those at war' are introduced by the pupils. The children no longer have a church within the village, so staff make good use of the local village hall. Pupils' understanding of the Anglican Church is enhanced by visits to the nearby village church at Brayton and York Minster. At the church, children dress in vestments, learn about the building and see how the liturgical colours used in school are the same as in church.

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

The school is moving forward under the leadership of the governors, vicar and headteacher to enhance Barlow's status as an Anglican school and to increase the impact the Christian values have on the community. Areas for development from the previous inspection have been met in full. The formation of the Christian ethos group over three years ago, comprising of governors, staff and clergy, produces an energy and dynamism to the development of the Christian ethos within the school. The chair of governors evidences how this group has made a significant impact by ensuring that 'the ethos goes home and affects parents and all who live there'. The school development plan includes targets for collective worship and for RE, ensuring that statutory requirements are met. It states that the school aims are 'inspired by Christian values', and its strap line, 'a family learning and growing in God's love' all indicate clearly to the community the school's commitment to its church status. The local vicar states that he and the foundation governor see their role as being the link between the church and the school ensuring the wellbeing of the whole school community. He explains how the greatest joy of the role is to be in school and 'to share God's love, and to convey an accessible God'. Governors are involved in monitoring and evaluating the ethos of the school and this clearly impacts on the outcomes from the Christian ethos group. Governors and staff have an accurate understanding of the school's performance and can talk with confidence about the school's strengths and areas for development. The school engages well with the Diocese and is involved in a local cluster group that aims to strengthen church school leadership in the local community.