



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Aberford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane

Aberford

LS25 3BU

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: York

Local authority: Leeds

Date of inspection: 13 November 2015

Date of last inspection: November 2010

School's unique reference number: 107985

Headteacher: Philippa Boulding

Inspector's name and number: Paul Bramley 326

School context

Aberford Primary School is a small primary school of 103 pupils. It serves the local village with a small number of children attending from the surrounding area. The school is situated in a very pleasant position close to the village church. The pupils come from mainly professional backgrounds, with almost all being of White British origin. The proportion known to qualify for pupil premium is well below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. The present headteacher has been in post for three years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Aberford as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Explicit Christian values impact positively on the approach to all aspects of school life resulting in the greatly improved achievement of learners, over time.
- The inspirational leadership and vision of the headteacher and governors results in an exceptional understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness.
- Excellent links with the church enable staff, parents and carers to view the church and school as one family.
- Collective worship, focussed on Christian teaching, is inspirational, and impacts significantly on the wider lives of all connected to the school.

Areas to improve

- Develop areas within the school grounds to allow children time and space for individual spiritual reflection and prayer.

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

This is a school that really does live its Christian values. The headteacher and governors are determined to see their chosen values in action and not merely to be represented in policy and documentation. Christian values are at the very centre of the school's work and have

underpinned the significant improvements in achievement and attainment seen in recent years. Children understand the effect of these values on their learning, and speak of the importance of fellowship and support. Their moral and social development is therefore excellent. Children enjoy school and love learning which results in very good attendance. They speak with enormous enthusiasm about the care and attention they receive from adults and peers. Parents speak of their feeling welcomed and of their confidence to approach the school with any concerns or problems. They praise the leadership of the school at every opportunity. They state the difference that the Christian character of the school makes to their children, ensuring that each is cared for, nurtured and celebrated as a child of God. Relationships are excellent, with a strong sense of team evident from everyone connected to the school. An ethos of aspiration and seeking continuous improvement is evident in policies, planning and in practice. Following the last inspection, excellent progress has been achieved to ensure that Aberford's profile as a Church of England primary school is celebrated and developed. The links with the church are extremely strong with the present incumbent playing a prominent and inspirational role in the life of the school. Within the curriculum, religious education (RE) is given a very high priority, supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Topics such as Judaism and Islam include visits to places of worship, such as a synagogue, where pupils can learn from practical activities. Such exciting and educational experiences provide a good insight into a range of cultures different from their own. Living in an almost mono-cultural community, parents, staff and governors welcome the increasing global awareness that gives children a greater knowledge of the wider world community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. It is engaging, inspirational and celebrated by all connected to the school. Children and adults alike speak of their enjoyment and fulfillment through this activity. The headteacher highlights how the development of collective worship is of paramount importance to the raising of the profile of Aberford as a Church of England school. All staff contribute, with children heavily involved in preparing, leading, and participating. Children totally engage with worship and behaviour is excellent. Planning is very thorough and follows the church calendar. Anglican elements are clearly evident through the use of candles, the Bible, and prayer. Worship links Bible stories to values that are central to the school. Children are developing a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is symbolised through the lighting of a three-wicked candle at the start of collective worship. Children talk about collective worship with passion and reflect exceptionally well upon the messages that they hear. Monitoring and evaluation by foundation governors, the headteacher and children is excellent. Governors clearly define their role as one of ensuring that the Christian values are at the forefront of all activity. Links with the local church are outstanding with the curate and foundation governor being regular visitors. Activity such as the curate's 'big questions' sessions are very well received by the children. They note that this is a time when they can ask the curate whatever they wish, or 'just wonder'. Children and the community visit the church on a regular basis. Parents speak of the impact that such visits have and of how the termly 'family Sunday service' is now exceptionally well attended. The school also enjoys excellent links with the Methodist church, where the minister has been a regular visitor to the school until recently moving away from the parish. Each class has its own reflective area with a cross and artefact allowing time for personal prayer and reflection. The school has already identified that extending prayer spaces and developing its spiritual trail, using areas within the school grounds, is an area for development.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors of the school consistently promote and live out a vision based on Christ's teachings. This vision provides children with a place of learning that is rooted in distinctly Christian values. The school is extremely well led and managed by the headteacher and governors. As a result, there is a great sense of team, along with a striving for improvement.

This is rooted in very accurate self-evaluation and an explicit Christian vision. Such a vision impacts very positively on pupils in terms of their learning and wellbeing. The foundation governors monitor the distinctive nature of the school exceptionally well through the church school ethos group, and see their role as one of holding the school to account. They confidently and constructively comment on aspects of Christian distinctiveness, such as collective worship and RE. The governors are regular visitors to the school, reporting back on their visits at every full governing body meeting. All development points from the previous inspection have been addressed in full. Children are actively involved in the leadership of the school through the 'Aberford children's ethos committee' (ACE). At this group children make suggestions that are always well received and acknowledged. For example, changing seating arrangements for collective worship and the choice of charities to support. The leadership of RE and collective worship are outstanding with staff constantly seeking ways of involving children in exciting and engaging topics. Provision for SMSC development is also excellent, ensuring that children develop as confident and caring learners. Relationships with parents, carers and the local community are exceptional with numerous activities taking place. For example, delivering harvest hampers to local residents. The school benefits from a very good relationship with the Diocese that includes professional development training and support. Governors are aware of the need for succession planning and ensure that the school is well placed to address the demands of a changing educational landscape, through collaborative work. As a result, Aberford enjoys good links with two clusters of schools that provide mutually beneficial partnerships.

SIAMS report November 2015 Aberford CE VC Primary, School Lane, Aberford, LS25 3BU