



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Kingsley St John's Church of England Primary School

Hollow Lane
Kingsley
Frodsham
WA6 8EF

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire West and Chester

Date of inspection: 8 May 2014

Date of last inspection: 25 February 2010

School's unique reference number: 111317

Headteacher: Rachel Jones

Inspector's name and number: Ian Newton 273

School context

The school was part of a federation with another small rural school until the summer of 2013, when it shared the head teacher and governing body. A new head teacher with responsibility for this school only was appointed from January 2014. There are 44 pupils on roll of whom very few qualify for free school meals and/or the pupil premium. An above average number have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupil numbers have increased by around 30% since September 2013. There have been significant changes of staff since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kingsley St John's as a Church of England school are good

- The strong Christian vision which is the driving force of the new leadership team.
- Very good relationships amongst all members of the school community are based on trust, respect and Christian love and are particularly reflected in children's behaviour.
- Staff have good professional knowledge of their pupils enabling them to meet children's individual needs to a high degree.

Areas to improve

- To undertake self evaluation as a church school, involving all stakeholders, which will help leaders plan for the future.
- To involve children in the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship so that they have ownership of it and can influence how it will meet their needs.

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

Christian values are the driving force of the school. The strong Christian ethos permeating this school community ensures that children are thoughtful towards others and relationships are based on trust and respect. This strongly impacts on children's lives and is evident in high standards of behaviour and very good attendance. The school's Christian distinctiveness also supports the good level of achievement. Staff know children very much as individuals and ensure that each receives the appropriate level of support that is needed to ensure that they fulfil their potential. They understand that they are doing the best for themselves rather than competing with one another. They have good self-esteem and have the strength to believe in themselves. The school serves local families and some who come from further afield because they value a church school education for their child. Both parents and children liked the size of the school and the community spirit that is alive here. They also spoke of the valuable work that the church youth worker does leading after school activities and including the Year 6 pupils in the church youth club. This not only strengthens church and school links, but more importantly it reinforces Christian values which church and school are promoting with the children. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children have opportunities of learning about the challenges that others face in their lives through the school's links with one in China and another in South Africa. Fund raising is undertaken for a number of good causes both in the United Kingdom and the wider world. Children are aware of the work undertaken by the parish church and Methodist Church locally through good links established with them. Visits by older children to the Liverpool Cathedrals and Chester Cathedral give them insights into the wider role of the church. An issue from the previous inspection was 'To explore ways in which Christian values can be explicitly linked to excellent relationships' has been fully met. In response, an 'Ethos' committee was formed to give this direction and focus which involved the incumbent and reader from the church. Christian values have been embedded into lesson plans, children's interpretations and understanding of values have been listened to, links with the parish have been strengthened, and a friendship garden established. Reflection areas have been established in all classrooms and in the school foyer. Religious Education (RE) supports the school's Christian character well. When asked what can be learned from RE one child said 'It teaches us a way of life.' The school is not yet outstanding because there is still work to do on raising the profile of the school as a Christian foundation, children have a limited understanding of the church's role internationally and RE needs further development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. It is underpinned by the teaching of Christian values and promotes the vision for the school. Senior staff consider that collective worship is the pinnacle of the school from which the curriculum comes. It is the experience through which the 'feeding of the soul of the child takes place' as one senior staff member described it. It is valued for providing opportunities for children to reflect on their behaviour and morals and introducing key elements of the Christian faith. Children know about Jesus through stories told and how these relate to their own lives. Prayer is important and a regular feature of the school day both within and outside of the act of worship. This aids their understanding of concepts such as God and the Trinity. Adults share their faith with children, which gives confidence to ask questions about deeper religious issues. Parents spoke of issues such as bereavement being discussed with some children and felt that this helped them not to be 'feared by death.' They also felt that the introduction to the Christian faith that children received gave a basis on which to make future decisions about religious belief. Children enjoy the variety of worship leaders that they experience in a typical week, which includes staff members and parish representatives. Worship takes place in church at major festivals and on occasions when the school does presentations there. A local tradition is that two children from the school read the Roll of Honour at the local war memorial on Remembrance Sunday,

thus broadening experience of public worship. Children are familiar with some aspects of Anglican practice. They know the Lord's Prayer, the grace, are becoming familiar with some responses and know some Christian symbols. They are familiar with some of the sacraments and see the Eucharist being celebrated when the school attends church on some Sundays. Planning for collective worship is comprehensive and liaison takes place with the parish to ensure that all worship leaders know what is expected. Acts of worship are appropriately evaluated by members of staff. However, children are not involved in planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship. A candle, bowl and cross are used as focal points, the bowl being a place where children can place their personal prayers. An issue from the previous inspection was 'To clarify the distinction between assemblies and worship and communicate its value' and has been fully met. In response, the profile of collective worship has been raised.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Children's achievement in religious education (RE) is good because teaching is good also. There are well thought out plans based on the recently published Local Authority Agreed Syllabus. Planning makes good links to other curriculum areas and collective worship. In addition to Christianity pupils learn about Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. Some pupils said that it helps them to understand others, have respect for them and not make judgements about people just because of their beliefs. Standards in RE are similar to those in other core curriculum areas. Given the small pupil cohorts and high levels of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils make good progress because of the good level of support provided. Most pupils enter the school with the level of skills expected for their age and make very good progress leaving with above average levels of attainment. The scrutiny of children's work indicated secure understanding of the topics studied. For example, children could confidently explain the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam. In the lesson that was observed children were focussing on creation and the importance of caring for the environment, which also linked to that day's collective worship. RE is well led by a teacher who knows where this curriculum area needs to go next and has plans in place to implement the next phase of the revised Agreed Syllabus. Governors are kept well informed of developments in RE through the head teacher's report to the governing body. RE is considered 'good' rather than 'outstanding' because the new syllabus is not fully in place so it is too early to be able to make a thorough assessment of its impact.

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

The recently appointed head teacher quickly identified the need to raise the school's Christian distinctiveness and devised an appropriate development plan. The head teacher and governing body are committed to a vision for the school based on Christian values. An issue from the last inspection was 'To make explicit and communicate a clear vision and set of aims for the school.' The formation of the 'Ethos' group resulted in Christian values being linked with class work and collective worship, and embedded into lesson planning. Recently revised policy documents are underpinned by Christian values, for example, positive reinforcement runs through the 'Good Behaviour Policy.' Whilst secure plans have been put in place for the school generally, self-evaluation as a church school still needs to be undertaken. This links with an issue from the previous inspection relating to the involvement of all members of the school community in evaluating and developing St John's distinctiveness as a church school, which still needs tackling. In recent years some staff have gone on to other schools for promotion. Staff are given opportunities to lead aspects of school life and staff and governors take advantage of training opportunities available from the Local Authority and the Diocese. A new governing body was formed last September when the federation was dissolved. New governors are aware of their roles and good quality training has also been provided from within the existing governing body. Some are able to do voluntary work in the school, thus enabling them to get to know the children and the school better. There are good links with parents, who feel that

staff are very approachable, thus engendering a strong level of confidence in them. Parish links are good with clergy and the parish youth worker all being held in high regard for their contributions to school life. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met by the school.

SIAMS report May 2014, Kingsley St John's, Kingsley, Frodsham, WA6 8EF