



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christ Church C of E Academy

Wrose Brow Road
Windhill
ShIPLEY
BD18 2NT

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 8 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 7 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 139201

Headteacher: Phillipa Foster

Inspector's name and number: Doug Masterton 483

School context

Christ Church Academy serves an urban district in Shipley approximately 4 miles north of Bradford. It is smaller than average with 208 children on roll, aged 4 to 11 years and with a lower than average proportion of girls. Most children are of White British heritage. The proportions of children having special educational needs and those eligible for free school meals are both well above average. In 2013, it converted to an Academy from its predecessor, Windhill Church of England Primary School. In February 2015, the school was graded by OFSTED as requiring improvement.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church Academy as a Church of England school are good.

- Academy status and strengthened leadership has led to substantial strengthening of the Christian character of the school resulting in a much improved climate for learning. This is benefitting all children, but particularly those vulnerable to failure. Standards are improving.
- School collective worship powerfully focusses the whole community in applying school Christian values to guide its work but standards and progress in religious education (RE) do not yet reflect children's full potential.
- School leaders and governors have skill, insight, zeal and determination to fulfil their responsibilities to offer highly effective education, informed by Christian values, for the benefit of the local community.

Areas to improve

- Introduce a robust system of assessment in RE to support better improvement and standards.
- Support children to develop a more philosophic, mature, critical and rational approach to their understanding of Christianity, faith and belief by the time they move to secondary education.
- Plan staff development strategically for future leadership in church schools.
- Develop children's contribution to collective worship, including the challenge that they plan and lead.

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

Changing to becoming an Academy has revitalised the Christian character of the school. The school has chosen clear Christian values which are applied throughout the curriculum as well as within collective worship and RE. There is purposeful focus on the needs of every child with very generous provision for those requiring additional support for learning or aspects of their behaviour. In the Academy children are making secure progress. A legacy of under-achievement is being eradicated and current assessments for all year groups point to future growing improvement in published test results. Careful sensitive support to vulnerable children has raised their standards, improved their self-esteem and almost entirely eliminated the need for any exclusion. All children are now succeeding, whatever the difficulties they face arising from their personal circumstances and this stems directly from the way the key school Christian values of Compassion and Hope have informed policy, provision and the culture of learning in school. Parents testify to a transformation in the attitudes and behaviour of children in the school. Children at the school grow to become lively learners, receptive to new ideas, confident to speak and very willing to grapple with ideas about Christian belief and faith. They are respectful of different opinions but need more support to develop a framework for organising their understanding of such concepts as fact, tradition, evidence, interpretation, belief, commitment and responsibility. The school community is harmonious. Children are known and liked by the adults they work with. Parents welcome improved educational provision and the quality of the relationships that govern life in school. The close proximity of the school to districts with contrasting profiles of ethnicity and faith gives children experience of diversity. They recognise the special link of the school to the local Anglican church. They are made fully aware of other traditions in their RE and through co-operative activities with other local schools. RE is a key school subject, set alongside numeracy and literacy in importance, but used extensively as the special vehicle to grow children's breadth of global and philosophical understanding and to stimulate the teaching of Christian values in other areas of the curriculum. To become outstanding in this aspect, the school must further raise achievement for all children and grow their personal spirituality, particularly through their study of RE.

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

Whole-school collective worship takes place each day, except on Fridays when small mixed-aged groups come together. Content is very carefully planned by the Headteacher who views it as one of her prime responsibilities to ensure that it is of relevance and inspiration for both children and adults. It is the principal way by which the school expresses its Christian values and aspirations for children's achievement. Content embraces themes of significance, Bible stories, the church calendar. These integrate to form a stimulating programme of high quality, founded on Christian ideas and values. For example, the issue of 'Fair Trade' is explored in depth, using clever strategy to include and engage children, so that participants understand a faith perspective to the issues of justice and equitable rewards. Children write many prayers, which are displayed in all classes and they are drawn on frequently. Such planned stimulus and children's own contributions secures their full engagement. The result is often an individual resolve to address need and injustice. Children report that thinking about the prayers that they write influences their own attitudes and decisions particularly concerning their relationships with friends and family. Parents are welcomed to join school collective worship on special occasions concerning their own children. At the present time, children's potential contributions to their collective worship through evaluation, planning and leading have not been fully explored. Anglican theology concerning the nature of God is introduced with links being made with the ideas of Father, Son and Holy Spirit particularly within Collective Worship planned around Easter. The parish priest leads collective worship on special occasions but also offers inspiring and constant support to the school in order to secure its quality and impact, seeing it as the most effective way he can bring worship into the lives of parish families. The impact of current school collective worship can be further improved by expecting more from the children themselves, enriching the stimulus and gathering more evidence of its impact on children's lives.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory.

Current school standards in RE are broadly comparable to those obtained by children in their literacy. The majority of them are reported as reaching the standards expected for their current age. School evidence from assessment is incomplete and insufficiently robust for judgements to be made on whether or not each child is making the year-by-year progress in this subject that is looked for. There is much teaching of RE in the school that is good, for example the work done with some of the youngest children on the topic of Palm Sunday where they are challenged to understand the symbolism of events in the story. Similarly, oldest children extend their learning on the temptations of Jesus by being asked to imagine those that could be experienced by stereotypical characters in a modern age, and to consider in what way support from a Christian perspective might help. However, school evaluation shows that not all teaching of RE is yet of a high standard. Children's response to good teaching is very positive; they work hard to understand and co-operate in their learning. Conversion to Academy status has required the school to change to using the RE syllabus published by the former diocese of Bradford and Ripon & Leeds. This is resulting in a greater priority being given to the study of Christianity but without neglecting coverage of other major world religions. The school has recently taken steps to strengthen the leadership of teaching in RE but this has not yet had time to secure quality provision throughout the school or to accelerate progress made by all children in the subject. More training and support is now available for class teachers reflecting school leaders' determination to improve provision and standards in RE.

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

Academy status has led to a profound improvement in the effectiveness of this school. The appointment of key leaders, who have relentlessly sought to understand and apply the school's Christian values of Trust, Wisdom, Compassion, Justice and Hope, is significantly improving the quality and character of the education that is offered. There is a consequent greatly improved impact on the lives of the children. Standards are rising and the greater well-being of the children is evident in their positive attitude towards their schooling and greatly improved behaviour. They know and understand that Christ Church is not simply about Christian labels but that life and work in school is based on values. The head teacher brings perception, drive and ambition for high achievement for both children and the adults who work with them. She has an unrelenting commitment to transforming the Academy and is greatly assisted by the parish priest who attaches the highest priority to his school-focused work. He supports the school community in understanding the potential strength of its Christian values, and how to apply them in strategies for cooperative community engagement. High commitment to achieving school effectiveness stems from his Christian vocation towards the local Windhill community; one now largely unconnected with local churches. Planning and review by managers and governors is of high quality. Evaluation of school effectiveness by the head teacher is comprehensive and very self-critical. Greater strength towards growing future leadership for church schools is developing through the ways in which the school is organised, shared planning and internal review. However, there is insufficient strategic development of such skills building resilience to withstand normal levels of possible staff turnover. Partnership with the parish church is strong with the school now viewed as the main channel for mission. Links to the deanery and diocese are currently less well explored for the contribution they can offer both for children and future school development. Parents speak warmly about the school and recognise how much it has recently improved, particularly its work in helping vulnerable children. The weaknesses in Leadership and Management highlighted in two previous inspection reports have been eradicated. Leaders and managers are, if anything, now over self-critical concerning their own effectiveness but their work must ultimately be judged by the degree to which all children admitted flourish both academically and personally. Collective worship and RE in the school meet statutory requirements.