



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Skelton Newby Hall Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Skelton on Ure
Ripon
North Yorkshire
HG4 5AJ

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Dates of inspection: 7 July 2016

Date of last inspection: April 2011

School's unique reference number: 121589

Headteacher: Lamara Taylor

Inspector's name and number: Nigel Castledine (652)

School context

Skelton Newby Hall Church of England Primary is a below average sized school, with three classes. Situated in a small rural village, it has extensive grounds. It serves local communities and the outskirts of the city of Ripon. The number of pupils has significantly increased in recent years. The majority of children are from White British heritage and all have English as their first language. The number of disadvantaged children is much lower than the national average. Since the last inspection the school has federated with Sharow Church of England Primary. The two schools now share the same governing body and headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Skelton Newby Hall as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Clearly understood gospel values underpin the life of the school and inform the school's approach to a distinctive Christian education and nurture that enriches children's lives
- Affirming relationships, strengthened by gospel teaching, create a happy school family in which the God-given value of each child is celebrated
- The school makes exceptional use of its extensive grounds and rural setting as a natural outdoor classroom in which all can experience the seasonal wonders of God's creation
- The strong links to families, the local churches and the community ensure the school is an integral and valued part of village life

Areas to improve

- Further develop the children's involvement in collective worship so that they acquire the skills necessary for them to plan, lead and evaluate all aspects independently
- Widen the children's knowledge and experiences of contrasting beliefs in order to broaden their perceptions of Christianity and other major world faiths
- Extend the ways in which the school supports children to acquire an age-appropriate understanding of the Christian doctrine of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit

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

This school uses its fertile Christian ethos to ensure an excitingly full education for every child. The welcoming atmosphere of the school stems from its seven chosen Christian values. Both children and staff understand these and ensure that they strive to follow the Christian teaching they represent. Small stones bearing the name of one of these values are awarded by pupils to individuals who are considered to be exemplifying that value. This creates an impressive fluency with the Biblical teaching from which each value originates. The values form the basis of the school's caring family atmosphere in which every child is respected and loved. The children have a growing knowledge of the culture and diversity of their world. One older girl commented, 'Just because you're different, it doesn't mean you can't be friends'. The children's appreciation of global multi-cultural influences is seen in their creative responses in art, dance and music. The aesthetically-beautiful Newby Estate church of Christ the Consoler was used as the setting for an impressive display of this work. Religious education (RE) is a core subject with high academic standards. It excites the children's learning about Christianity and other world faiths. Use of the 'Philosophy for Children' approach has enabled the children to consider the big questions of life and belief as part of their RE. This approach also enables the children to consider their own opinions and responses to worship and belief. Both staff and children provide strong positive role models which encourage all pupils to behave responsibly. When there are disagreements, the children are supported in using restorative justice to re-establish harmony. Incidents of bullying are rare and are speedily and appropriately resolved. Children are keen to show Christian service in school and the local community. They also help others through their enthusiastic fundraising for global and local charities. Because they are happy, children like coming to school and attendance levels are above national expectations. Children make good academic progress, attaining standards which are close to or above national expectations. Disadvantaged children and those with special education needs also make similar good progress. The school's environment is a vital component and stimulus within the curriculum. It helps the children to appreciate the natural beauty and wonder of the school's setting. The need for careful stewardship of God's creation is very evident to the children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is based round the school's core Christian values. Its structured format is carefully planned by senior staff. It ensures that Biblical teaching underpins the children's understanding that school values come from the teachings of Jesus Christ. School worship takes many styles and formats which include being held outside in the school grounds. This adds an extra rich spiritual dimension. All acts of worship contain opportunities for praise, prayer and reflection in an atmosphere of reverence. The worship table reflects Anglican tradition with its cross, Bible and the lighting of a candle. The children experience elements of Anglican liturgy and often use the Lord's prayer. Insightful governor evaluation of worship takes place regularly. However, the children are not involved in formal worship evaluation process and do not lead worship independently. Worship takes place regularly in St Helen's church when the priest in charge leads the liturgy. Whilst the children experience the Holy Trinity during worship, they do not have a clear understanding of its Christian theology. Children speak of their enjoyment of worship and how they learn from the themes. Focusing on the principles of Fairtrade, worship prompted a child to respond, 'I am going to think more about what I buy and eat'. School celebrations for the Christian festivals of Christmas, Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving take place in the local churches. The children help to lead these acts of worship which are well attended by parents and families. Prayer takes place through the day with use of Grace before lunch and a home time prayer. Children's spontaneous prayer and reflection is inspired by the school environment. One child described the spirituality of walking in the torch-lit darkness in her costume from school to the estate church for the nativity play. She observed 'Being an angel walking through the wood made me feel I was there on the night Jesus was born'.

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

The passionate leadership of the headteacher inspires the school community to strive for the very best outcomes for every child. Supported by the federated governing body, the headteacher and her senior staff systematically evaluate every aspect of school life. This ensures that the Christian distinctiveness of the school remains a strong foundation for each child's successful learning journey. The school has taken the necessary steps to act on the development points from the last inspection. Independent governor evaluation of the school's Christian ethos is regularly undertaken which informs ongoing policy and development decisions. Parents and carers comment very favourably on the life of the school and its Christian nurture. One described this care as, 'The loving arms of the school put around each and every child'. Parents value the ways in which children are inspired by the school's faith ethos. They perceive how this helps children to grow in responsibility in supporting one another. The school curriculum is planned to integrate social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning. This promotes well-being in a distinctively Christian format. The recent rapid growth in pupil numbers has been eased by the ways in which new children are welcomed by their peers. Similarities are explored and differences are celebrated in new friendships. This response stems from the children's understanding of the school's Christian values which emphasise love and respect. The diocese has been involved with the school through the work of the local adviser in strengthening governance and enriching collective worship. The federation enables the cross-transfer of mutually beneficial professional expertise between the schools. This is exemplified by the experienced worship and RE co-ordinator from Sharow CofE working alongside the Skelton staff team. Such professional growth opportunities are part of both schools' regular programmes of ongoing staff development. Relationships between the local church community and the school are mutually positive. The priest in charge is part of the school team and well known to the local communities. Parents' commitment to the school is focused through the fundraising and social activities of the thriving parents', teachers' and friends' association. The local communities value their neighbourhood school greatly and give practical support by taking part in school fundraising and open events.

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