



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Hampsthwaite Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane
Hampsthwaite
Harrogate
HG3 2EZ

Diocese: Ripon & Leeds

Local authority: North Yorkshire
Dates of inspection: 12th February 2014
Date of last inspection: 12th June 2009
School's unique reference number: 121567
Headteacher: Mr Andrew Phoenix
Inspector's name and number: Mr R D Masterton No. 283

School context

Hampsthwaite Church of England Primary School serves a village located near Harrogate in the Yorkshire Dales. There are 115 children on roll, the majority of whom are white British with a smaller than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals or with special educational needs and disabilities. The school is located close to the parish church where there is currently an interregnum. The present head teacher was appointed in January 2013.

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

- Christian values, clearly expressed and put into action, permeate every aspect of life and work in the school.
- Through a curriculum rich in Christian perspectives and taught by committed teachers with high expectations, children make rapid progress and reach the highest standards of academic and personal development.
- Children's spirituality is remarkable and they measure their own personal development against the values that the school teaches.
- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher has built a school with inner strength, a commitment and belief in the value of its Christian distinctiveness and one that the community greatly admires.

Areas to improve

- Detailed criteria for evaluating the Christian character and effectiveness of the school should be used by the governing body in order to sustain further improvement.
- Give pupils further opportunities for children to experience forms of Anglican worship including Holy Communion.
- Give children opportunities to meet, work and play with their peers from other faiths and cultures.

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

Hampsthwaite School is a remarkable example of the way that the curriculum and all other provision shaping the life of the school can be achieved by the systematic application of clearly stated Christian values. In consequence, the academic achievement of the children and their personal development, particularly their spiritual development, is of the highest standard. Relationships between children and the adults who work with them are outstanding. An ethos which is relaxed, respectful, enjoyable, hard-working, supportive and caring permeates the school; achievement of every kind is celebrated. The school Christian values of belief, respect, friendship, support and creativity are interpreted through teaching in all subjects and underpin all school work. Children grow to recognise them as the best and most important features of their school. Teaching references Christian values whenever they can make a contribution to learning. The school is helping the diocese to pioneer this powerful and creative approach that reinforces maturity and spirituality so effectively. Children become confident in using them both to make sense of the world they explore and to shape their ideas concerning faith. Children also reflect upon and describe their own understanding of school values as they grow thus revealing the progress of their spiritual development. Many school initiatives teach children about the diversity of faith communities; they have visited a synagogue and a Hindu temple as well as the local church and chapel. They have developed compassion and concern for others in the world, actively supporting Fair Trade initiatives, working with Henshaws College, a local school for blind people, and welcoming to the school children from the Chernobyl district in the Ukraine. They have not yet had much opportunity to meet, work and play with their peers from other faith and diverse ethnic communities living in the UK. Religious Education (RE), both as a taught subject and as an underlying theme, permeates school work. Unsurprisingly, achievement in RE matches or exceeds that in the core subjects of Mathematics and English. It is no wonder that children enjoy coming to school so much and that their parents from whatever their faith background or none hold it in such high regard, greatly appreciating how it shapes the high achievement and spiritual maturity of their children.

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

Children and parents both describe daily collective worship as the key aspect of the school that makes it special and different. A worship committee comprising children, staff and governors oversees the careful planning and evaluation which results in a rich experience that inspires all the school community with many Bible stories and teaching of Jesus. Collective worship is marked with the lighting of a candle and includes songs and prayers with many opportunities to take part. Children readily helped the Head Teacher with his presentation on the theme of music as a source of spiritual inspiration and exemplified by a Bible story of Saul. They acted simple roles, helped technically, and answered questions enthusiastically. Many were ready to volunteer to say their own prayer, composed on the spot or spoken from memory in front of the whole school. A relaxed ambiance for an experience of learning and praying together inspired children's impeccable behaviour and the rapt attention of all present. No wonder then that children recognise the value of their collective worship and are readily inspired to go on to write their own prayers, thinking carefully about who listens and what they should be for. Children read each other's prayers and teachers use them when appropriate such as those written to pray for Africa following the death of Nelson Mandela. Collective worship, supplemented by teaching in RE gives children a breadth of understanding about God; they can use the concepts of God, Jesus and the Spirit to interpret Bible teaching they have covered and how Christians behave. They talk at home about the collective worship they have experienced. More recently, pupils on the worship committee have themselves started to plan and lead acts of collective worship. Frequent use is made of the parish church. Children have been present at a baptism but have not yet been part of a Holy Communion service although they know about its relationship to The Last Supper and Easter story.

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

There is total clarity concerning the Christian values that shape life and work at Hampsthwaite School. Communication and application of this vision has led directly to the high achievement of the children and the self-evident Christian ethos that is so powerful and persuasive that children and parents of all faiths or none are drawn into it and want to be part of the school. The recently appointed head teacher provides outstanding, inspirational leadership which empowers and develops those who work with him. The governing body exercises its care and scrutiny of the school through great commitment by its members. They are determined to continue to build upon the already strong links between the church and the school and seek to ensure that a new priest for the parish will help them to strengthen a common mission. Under the head teacher, the staff are growing their talents in church school leadership through his guidance and also actively undertaking other further professional development including training for religious education. There is a firmly established culture of critical self evaluation of the school as a church school. Governors are informed by very detailed reports, data and evaluation from the head teacher for each meeting and their own frequent visits. However governors do not currently use detailed criteria to help identify for themselves how best the school may further improve. The school has benefited over many years from the considerable contribution of the parish priest to collective worship, RE and governance. A special effort has been made to safeguard the continued work of clergy in school during the interregnum with support from a retired priest living locally. Thus the links to the local church community are considerable with extensive use of the church building for RE, contributions to church worship and with some children in the Sunday School and the choir. Children have also visited the village Methodist chapel as part of the way the school works with both local Christian communities. Parents and carers are not only welcomed to join in school activities and collective worship but their input to school evaluation is repeatedly sought and encouraged.

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