



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St Hilda's Ampleforth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Station Road

Ampleforth

YO62 4DG

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: York**

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Date of inspection: 11 March 2016

Date of last inspection: May 2011

School's unique reference number: 121475

Headteacher: James Pynn

Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby 137

#### School context

St Hilda's is a very small rural primary school with 16 full time pupils on role. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding or identified as vulnerable is significantly higher than average. Following a long period of collaboration, the school became federated with Hovingham CE School in 2015. As a result there have been changes in the governing body. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2015.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Hilda's as a Church of England school are good

- The newly appointed headteacher, governing body and vicar have ensured the explicit expression of Christian values and Church school distinctiveness through the impact of the vision and values group.
- Pupils understand the impact of Christian values on their relationships, attitudes and behaviour and how these relate to the life of Jesus.
- The federation with Hovingham School, links with St Hilda's church and the local community give pupils a sense of belonging to a wider worshiping community.

#### Areas to improve

- Embed and celebrate the explicit Christian values and their biblical origins in displays around school.
- Ensure the continuing development of the distinctive Christian character of the school through the work of the visions and values group and their effective monitoring of ethos and worship.
- Give pupils greater opportunities for spiritual development through the creation of reflection areas in school and the school grounds.

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

The school has a warm, inclusive Christian ethos based on the four core values of the school; 'friendship, perseverance, respect and responsibility'. The impact of these is reflected in the school motto 'where everyone grows'. Children recognise the foundation of the school, explaining about St Hilda, as well as commenting 'it is good to be like Jesus and be a good person'. They also recognise that it is not necessary to be a Christian to follow the values because 'Jesus was for everybody'. Staff are role models of Christian values in action that are mirrored by children. As a result, relationships, behaviour and attitudes to work are good. Children are developing a good understanding of the impact of Christian values in school and their lives. However, although these values are communicated on the website and in school, the links to their biblical origins are not yet consistently recognised in displays. Children are happy, confident and articulate. They recognise Christian values in action, showing respect for everyone in school and perseverance to work hard and progress. Staff and children know each other well because of the size of the school. This means that staff know the talents and needs of each child. As a result, children are nurtured through challenge and support to achieve their potential. The school has introduced rigorous tracking to measure the progress of each child. Achievement is broadly in line with national expectations. However, the size of cohorts means that performance data is inconsistent. Attendance is good although as with achievement the size of cohort can result in fluctuations in data. The new curriculum, range of activities and links with Hovingham impact on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development. The school is currently carrying out an audit of SMSC opportunities in the curriculum to identify ensure even coverage. Children value their visits to Hovingham School that include opportunities for forest school activities, music and French, as well as social mixing. The children and school increasingly see themselves as part of a wider village community. There is greater understanding of the Catholic community, for example, sharing events organised by St. Hilda's Church to which St. Benedict's are also invited. Religious education is now recognised as a core subject. Children explore Christianity and other major faiths. Their books show they learn about and learn from religion. Teaching challenges the thinking skills of pupils who respond to questions such as 'Do you need to believe that Jesus was the Son of God to be inspired by his life and teaching?'

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is a key part of the school day to explore and reinforce the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Themes are based on a range of resources to ensure that children of all ages are engaged. Displays, including the Lords Prayer and focus area with a Bible and Christian artifacts encourage children to create a reverent atmosphere as they enter the hall. Worship follows the Anglican ritual with a greeting and the lighting of three candles by pupils. This reinforces the Trinity as three in one. Children explain the Trinity as 'God the Father is always with us, God the Son is the light of the world and God the Holy Spirit is inside us.' They make the link between the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the disciples, as the first Christians, telling everyone about Jesus. They are developing a good awareness of the life and teaching of Jesus as well as Christian festivals. Pupils are aware of the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, seasonal colours used in church and school and the symbolism of the candle, dove and rainbow. Leaders ensure that all pupils are engaged by lively storytelling and role-play. Links between values, Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus are made obvious, as well as the relevance of these today. Pupils respond well in answering questions and times for reflection. The importance of prayer emphasised by asking children for the most suitable posture. For example, to ask for forgiveness children suggested 'kneeling with our hands out stretched'. Children are also aware of personal prayer, with closed eyes or open to focus on a candle. The impact of worship is measured in different ways, including formal and informal discussion, observations and pupils' reflection journals. There is an on-going cycle of inquiry with next step actions and next monitoring identified, to measure progress. The newly introduced worship group, led by the vicar, extends pupil involvement in the planning delivery and monitoring of worship. Children are involved in the leadership of worship through the use of 'Flippin praise' materials. The school has strong links with St. Hilda's Church that is used to celebrate festival services. Altar frontals, made by the children are used in church. Church members support the activities in school, as well as school led services in church. Joining St Benedict's catholic school for the service of Remembrance, also attended by members of the community,

gives pupils a sense of belonging to a wider worshipping community. The school also shares a Christingle service and carol concerts with Hovingham school.

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

The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision and determination to raise the distinctive Christian character of the school and share this with the local community. This has enabled the Christian values of the school to be more explicitly stated, following a set of values agreed by the community. These are now increasingly obvious in the life of the school and shared in documentation and on the school website. Governors are very aware of the distinctive Christian character and the place of worship and RE following the recruitment and appointment process for the new headteacher. Diocesan training, and the sharing of the weekly diocesan newsletter, has also further developed governors' understanding by supporting the continuing development of the distinctive Christian character. These have given governors the knowledge to challenge, reflect and question to inform a cycle of evaluation and action. Link subject governors ensure all are aware of the role of collective worship and RE in school. The recognition of the profile of RE is seen in the support of the Esk Valley Alliance in developing the subject. All governors recognise the impact of the church calendar on school life and for example, the confidence of children speaking in church. Staff recognise how the school has developed and the impact of explicit Christian values on their work. The Vision and Values committee that includes the headteacher, vicar and foundation governors meet regularly to discuss and evaluate the Christian character of the school in relation to the inspection framework. Their findings are reported to the governing body, providing a greater focus for church school development. The introduction of 'What if learning' indicates the continuing development of a Christian based curriculum by leaders and managers. Self-assessment is accurate, with impact headlines accurately summing up aspects of distinctive church school. Parents recognise how the school has developed its ethos and values in a more explicit way. They value the opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. They comment positively about the impact of the school values on children and the secure links with St. Hilda's church and the local community. The federation with Hovingham school provides opportunities to share staff skills and expertise, with shared subject leaders and staff meetings. Children extend their friendship and social development through weekly visits.

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