

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Kingsland Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Werrington Road
Bucknall
Stoke on Trent
Staffordshire
ST2 9AS

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection Grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Stoke on Trent

Dates of inspection: 17 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 13th January 2011

School's unique reference number: 133766

Headteacher: Sara Goddard

Inspector's name and number: Huw D Bishop 344

School context

Kingsland is a larger than average primary school. It is situated in an area of high deprivation in Bucknall, Stoke on Trent. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are a few children from minority ethnic groups. A high proportion of pupils are disadvantaged, eligible for free school meals and are supported by additional funding known as the pupil premium. Nearly one-quarter of all pupils have special educational needs or disability and are given extra help with their learning. The school has very strong links with the parish church, and works in close partnership to support the needs of the local community.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kingsland Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by her excellent and cohesive leadership team. Together, they proclaim distinctive and clear Christian values that guide every aspect of life in school.
- The positive way in which school leaders have re-energised the quality of teaching and learning to enable rapid improvement in pupils' attainment and progress, thus meeting their academic needs well, within an inclusive, uncompromising and caring Christian environment.
- Relationships in school which are exceptional. Pupils are happy, want to learn, enjoy their learning and speak of their learning experiences with great enthusiasm.
- Vibrant and relevant worship that gives pupils enjoyable opportunities to worship in school and the parish church and participate with dignity, reverence and excitement.
- Committed governors who maintain a high profile in school and promote and support its work with vigour.

Areas to improve

- Use pupils' creative ideas to inform the planning of whole school collective worship and include pupils in leading and evaluating worship in school and in church.

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

The whole school community thrives within this ‘oasis’ of Christian love and care which nurtures the academic, personal and spiritual development and wellbeing of every child. The school’s mission statement ‘Together we are walking in the light with Jesus’ is evident on all documents and there are visual reminders that accompany pupils, teachers and visitors as they move around classrooms and other school areas. The school’s Christian character is made explicit through a number of ways, for example, each class is named after a Bible character, and there is a prayer tree in the main school entrance which pupils use for reflection and prayers as well as the cross as the central focal point. Also, footprint images of every pupil in school follow the footprint of Jesus, as in the famous poem. Pupils talk with great confidence about what this means and it has impacted significantly on all aspects of school life since the last inspection and particularly on the outcomes for all groups of pupils. Academic attainment in 2015 was well above the national average in almost all areas and the progress of pupils in school now shows that this level of success will continue. The school is highly effective in using information to track pupils’ progress in learning, and puts strategies in place to ensure they achieve challenging targets. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is well below the national average and leave with attainment that is, now, well above. This represents strong academic progress. However, this success is closely interwoven with the development of their personal spirituality. This is because the school’s actions to improve pupils’ chances are so strongly rooted in distinctive Christian values that make sure each child is known, valued and inspired to succeed as a unique child of God. Pupils speak with clarity and conviction about the Christian values they learn and that are important for their personal lives. An excellent example of this was demonstrated through a comment made by pupils that they felt ‘guarded by God’ when asked what it meant to them to be part of this church school. Parents, too, said that they and their children feel part of a family community and this encourages them to be proactive with school even if sometimes, this is difficult because of problems at home. Pupils’ efforts are acknowledged and celebrated and as a result, pupils want to be in school. Their attendance is above the national average and their behaviour and attitude to learning is excellent. Pupils enjoy a broad and rich curriculum which contributes fully to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Activities include an understanding of responsibility towards, and appreciation of God’s creation through the care of a number of school pets and by planting bulbs in the local park. Pupils understand the need to help others less fortunate than themselves through collecting food for the local food bank. They also raise money for national charities such as Children in Need, the NSPCC and Macmillan nurses. The school also sponsor two children, one in East India and another in Bolivia by collecting pennies in a wishing well. A moving letter from one of them begins with ‘I greet you in the peace of God ...and say goodbye with love’. This really helps pupils’ understanding of the global impact of being a Christian. British values are also promoted alongside the school’s Christian values. The school is both distinctive in its Christian character and inclusive in its approach to diversity. A visit to a synagogue, celebrating rites of passage and festivals from other faiths, are just some of the wide experience of diversity provided through the RE curriculum. The teaching of religious education (RE) is central to the school’s ethos and is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons. Throughout Lent, pupils have taken part in a daily act of kindness where they add a heart to the ‘Kingsland Kindness Bowl’ at the end of each day, if they have completed the challenge. This reinforces acts of personal selflessness as part of their Lenten discipline. Through the close partnership with the parish, pupils have introduced a credit union in partnership with the diocese of Lichfield. This ‘young saver’ scheme helps pupils to understand the effective stewardship of resources and the responsible use of money, as well as giving opportunities to save for the future.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship, planned carefully and of high quality includes Christian themes and important Christian festivals with a strong emphasis on Christian values. This helps pupils to

understand the nature of worship and Anglican traditions and practice. Worship makes a significant impact on pupils' lives and as such, pupils are very aware of its theological basis. Pupils are able to explain their developing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They say that Bible stories challenge them to think about their own behaviour. Pupils lead worship based on the lives of the biblical characters after whom their classrooms are named. Pupils benefit from a varied experience of worship led by the vicar of the parish church and other clergy from adjoining parishes as well as their own Children's Chaplain. The Children's Chaplain engages with pupils on spiritual and personal matters as well as supporting learning in classrooms. Pupils designed her ordination stole from a number of patterns created by them. The chaplain manages 'The Crystal', a special place of quiet and reflection which is used well to promote an inclusive atmosphere. Senior leaders, too, lead collective worship. Music is a strength of the school and pupils sing with such energy. '*Pupils experience worship with joy*' was the view of parents interviewed on the day of inspection. This is used effectively to enhance worship. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of worship themes through their involvement in activities such as readings, role play, prayers and singing, but they also say they would like a greater part in the planning and leading of whole school collective worship. In response to the focus for development raised at the last inspection, each classroom now has a reflection area where pupils have the opportunity to think quietly about anything important to them. These reflection areas were introduced after whole school training given by parish clergy to staff so they could support pupils' spiritual development more effectively. Pupils pray together before lunch and again, before they leave at the end of the day. They write their own prayers and also write requests for particular needs which are prayed for in whole school worship. Pupils compiled prayers for those caught up in the Paris bombings last year and assembled their petitions into the form of a dove of peace. The impact of this was deeply moving. Parents say they enjoy attending worship in school and in church. Pupils in Year 6 attend the Eucharist each half term at the parish church and those who are baptised receive the sacrament at the final service of the year. Governors speak of the impact of worship being evident in the numbers of parents who attend worship with their children and who seek pastoral care and support from the clergy in times of need.

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

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are highly effective in articulating the distinctive Christian vision and ethos and in promoting that ethos throughout the school to support effective learning. This is now bearing fruit with the much improved outcomes that all groups of pupils now enjoy. The headteacher's Christian faith is very evident in all aspects of her leadership in school. Such is the level of interaction in ministry with the parish that she is also a much valued member of the parish leadership team. This is truly an outstanding example of church and school working hand in hand in a ministry of learning and service to pupils, their parents and the local community. Pupils create a video report each year for the parish council as their way of reporting on the life of the 'parish school'. Foundation governors are experienced and passionate about their school and understand clearly what their role entails. They seek the views of parents and pupils in reviewing the school's Christian distinctiveness and support, challenge and monitor the school's work. Governors have been successful, alongside the leadership team, in ensuring that the academic needs of all the pupils are met. Issues raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. RE and collective worship are led with commitment and a genuine desire to look for ways to improve still further. Leaders are committed to the professional development of teachers, including succession planning for the school's future leadership. The school values the close relationship it has with the diocese. Pupils say they feel very comfortable in expressing their views and are confident that their ideas are taken seriously. The school values its relationship with parents and seeks their views on a range of issues. Parents appreciate the dedicated work of staff in supporting their children's personal and spiritual development as well as their academic success.

