



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Northern Saints Primary

Rotherham Road, Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR5 5QL

Previous SIAMS grade: Not previously inspected

Current inspection grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Durham

Local authority: Sunderland

Dates of inspection: 15th June 2015

Date of last inspection: NA

School's unique reference number: 139425

Headteacher: Steve Williamson

Inspector's name and number: Carole Snelling NS 519

School context

Northern Saints Primary opened in 2013 and is the successful amalgamation of an existing church school and the local community school. The school is a larger than average primary serving the area of North Sunderland. The pupils are mainly White British. There is significant social deprivation and working family poverty. The number of pupils with special educational needs and those who are in receipt of pupil premium funding is above the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Northern Saints Primary as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

- The passion, enthusiasm and determination of the head and governing body which have brought this school into being and laid foundations on which future developments of the school's Christian ethos can now be made.
- The focus on raising aspirations based on the implicit belief that Christian mission is at the heart of what the school does has helped to raise pupil achievement and attainment.
- Good and sometimes outstanding teaching in religious education (RE) has promoted opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development (SMSC).

Areas to improve

- Use the SIAMS schedule to help formalise and structure the evaluation and celebration of progress, to review the vision and values, the effectiveness and impact of work undertaken, and to ensure Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness are embedded and made explicit to all stakeholders as the school moves to the future.
- Enhance the development of collective worship by ensuring that there is rigorous

monitoring, evaluation and review and increased pupil participation in planning and delivery.

- Invest in high quality training and on going support for staff delivering RE and worship in order to enhance the learning experience for pupils.

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

The school has made a commendable start on its journey to becoming a church school but it has not yet fully worked out its vision in terms of Christian distinctiveness. Northern Saints is a fully inclusive school. A Christian caring ethos allows children to flourish. As a result when pupils leave at the end of Year 6 they have made outstanding progress. Disadvantaged pupils are rapidly closing the learning gap with their peers. Attainment is good for all and for some is outstanding. Children with special educational needs and higher ability are well supported and challenged to achieve their potential. Relationships between all in the school community are excellent; they are based on the implicit belief that Christian love must affirm and develop all. The values of trust, peace, love, hope and respect are implicit, however it is not clear that they are underpinned by gospel teachings. As a result, although pupils and parents know that this is a church school, they are unclear how these inform and impact on their daily experience. Children take pride in their school and enjoy their learning and extended school activities. The School Council are helping to shape the school's development. Pupils decided to fundraise for local and international charities, organise the play areas and open a reptile room. Citizenship opportunities are also evident through working with the local community and pupils undertaking responsibilities in school. Cultural visits, art and community projects, sport and outdoor education have a positive impact on the SMSC development of children. Opportunities for SMSC development are afforded in RE, worship and literacy and they have been fully identified in other areas across the curriculum. Residential visits contribute to building confidence, learning new skills, developing community and experiencing a feeling of awe and wonder. RE contributes to understanding of world faiths and to the Christian character of the school. The impact of this is the development of tolerance, cultural awareness and a contribution to social cohesion. Themes in RE and worship are sometimes linked though not consistently. Children are learning to reflect on the nature of God, a Year 3 commented, "God takes care of us". Display values children's achievements and talents and reflects the rich curriculum work that has been undertaken. Reflection corners and books of prayers created by pupils are evidence of spiritual development. One child had written "Faith is something that can turn anything sad into something happy" Pupils are well prepared for the transition to the next phase of their education.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The school is compliant in holding a daily act of collective worship. A range of staff contribute to worship which is delivered in Key Stages, as class worship and in a weekly celebration assembly. The enthusiastic worship coordinator after consultation with pupils and staff has very recently reviewed the schedule. A bespoke programme of new themes encompassing school values and the Anglican calendar is under development. A more rapid development of the opportunities for pupils to take an active role in worship is needed. Increased pupil involvement and participation in planning, delivering and effectively evaluating worship would allow a sense of ownership. There is no formal regular and robust system of observation and review of worship. Worship takes a clear pattern. Over time worship affords opportunities for SMSC, prayer, reflection and celebration through the medium of song, music, drama and Biblical stories. The school's philosophy is that the Bible must come to life through application and lessons rather than simply story telling. Worship is beginning to help pupils to understand the person of Jesus and the nature of the Trinity. There is some evidence of the impact of this in the care children show to all and in their stewardship activities, in their developing spirituality and self esteem. Prayer is a feature of the pupils' school life at the start and end of the day. Children know the Lord's Prayer and the response to the peace. Pupils in Key Stage I

explored "Trust" by listening to the story of Abraham. They were encouraged to consider who they could trust, and think about this during the day. Anglican services for Harvest, Christmas and Easter are held in church and these are well attended by pupils' families. The local clergy contribute to leading worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The school has adopted the agreed Diocesan Syllabus which allows for the teaching of Christianity and other major world religions. An enthusiastic and experienced leader of RE ensures that planning is shared and the subject is well resourced. Teachers know individual pupils' abilities and this informs planning, consequently progress is in line with core subjects. Good use of teaching assistants helps less confident pupils to access learning and to share their opinions. Comment marking is used; however children do not always respond to the teachers' feedback and next steps for learning are not always evident. Assessment tasks to allow students to demonstrate what they discover from religion will enhance progress. Revisiting the marking and assessment policy has already been identified as an area for improvement. Children enjoy their lessons and are fully engaged "they are the best lesson, it's fun". A variety of learning styles including thinking skills, talking pairs, teacher questioning, creative writing, use of video clips and opportunities for discussion ensure that pupils can access learning. The teaching over time is good with some that is outstanding. When it is outstanding the work is made relevant to the children and opportunities are given to explore learning from religion and to develop spiritually. Pupils have a good recall of prior learning, are developing subject specific vocabulary and confidently express their views. They understand something of the nature of God and Jesus; a year 4 pupil wrote "God is a good friend, reliable and trusting." The subject leader would benefit from time to carry out lesson observations and to attend high quality training. This would enable her to support the development of the RE team and enhance the learning experience of pupils.

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

At the start of Northern Saints' journey to becoming a church school, the governors chose to develop the Christian character of the school in a way that would ensure that those families who were not fully convinced of the change would feel included. Whilst there has been detailed strategic planning in ensuring the success of other areas of school life it has been lower key in developing the Christian ethos. A communitarian ethos is built on Six Firm Foundations, though the Christian values that are said to underpin these are not clearly worked out or expressed. The governors, headteacher and staff have created a Christian ethos that is implicit in the life of the school. Parents acknowledge that there has been a change for the better in ethos. They feel that there is open communication with staff and that their children are encouraged to aspire. The headteacher and governors have concentrated their efforts to date in ensuring that achievement is raised and a grading of Good was secured in the Ofsted inspection in January 2015. There is much that is new, exciting and under development in terms of growing a distinctly Christian character. Leaders have now reached a point where more effort can be focussed on ensuring that the school's Christian distinctiveness is made more explicit to all stakeholders. RE is well led and resourced. The headteacher has brokered good working relationships with local schools, the Diocese, other church schools and a neighbouring education authority improvement team. The links with Saint Cuthbert's church and the local clergy are well established. The clergy are frequent and welcome visitors to school. All of these initiatives are contributing to the overall progress of the school, building social capital and the transformation of the life chances for the children and families in the community. Education for the young people looks exciting and bright at Northern Saints and it will be interesting to see how the governors develop a Christian vision for the school which will shape its future.

Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

