

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Hose Church of England (VC) Primary School

Bolton Lane
Hose
Leicestershire
LE14 4JE

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Leicester

Local authority: Leicestershire

Dates of inspection: 25th March 2015

Date of last inspection: 22nd March 2010

School's unique reference number: 120135

Headteacher: Margaret Cox

Inspector's name and number: Jane Lewis 27

School context

This voluntary controlled primary school is located in a small rural village in the Vale of Belvoir. The school is smaller than average with the size of cohorts varying considerably. Since the previous SIAS inspection there have been considerable staffing changes, including a new headteacher. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly within the expected range of development. The church is located next to the school. The parish is currently without a vicar.

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

- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher motivates and inspires staff and children alike to give the best they can in all things
- Values impact on relationships and the personal development of all members of the school community enabling everyone to live out a Christian expression of those values
- Collective worship provides opportunity for the school community to share and reflect together, enabling each one to put into practice throughout the day the focus from that day's worship
- Religious Education (RE) promotes deep thinking enabling children to deal with big questions of faith and belief

Areas to improve

- Develop use of the RE Agreed Syllabus so that it can be more fully integrated across the whole curriculum and so have a more significant impact on pupils
- Include children more in planning collective worship so they can further develop their own theological understanding of key Christian doctrines
- Invite further parental evaluation of the school as a church school in order that their responses can inform future planning

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

The distinctively Christian values of the school are evident in all aspects of the school life including relationships amongst all in the school community and the commitment to do the very best for all pupils. The school provides an excellent learning environment, enabling all pupils to feel valued and achieve well. The Christian nature of the school is made clear in many ways including through documentation and around the school in displays and artefacts. The headteacher has driven forward the Christian character of the school, supported by her staff. All that happens in the school is clearly underpinned by a desire to be known as an effective church school. A clearly Christian ethos is articulated to all. Pupils show understanding of their school values as being 'ways to live as God wants us to'. Pupils' achievements are celebrated, and the level of Christian love and care provided by all staff demonstrates the very caring and safe environment in which children flourish. Consequently, behaviour is very good and attendance well above national levels. Children are helpful and supportive of each other. A Year 6 child said he will be kinder and more forgiving of others when he leaves the school 'because of the way I've been encouraged to do that at school'. The house system and mixed year group classes ensure that older children take care of younger ones. They take these responsibilities to support and encourage each other seriously, thus living out Christian values of kindness and fairness. Anyone in the school community can nominate a pupil to receive a 'horseshoe award' for showing Christian values in action. Data shows that all pupils make excellent progress during their time at the school. The care and effective intervention strategies that provide pastoral care for those who come from challenging backgrounds or have particular needs are extremely effective. The school takes seriously the need to care for the wellbeing of all members of its community. Parents comment on how they feel that their worries are taken up in a spirit of care and compassion for them as well as their children. The school provides opportunities to learn about and from other religions and cultures significantly improving their cultural understanding, respect and appreciation of faith diversity. Children are encouraged to consider others and demonstrate an understanding of their responsibilities through a large range of fundraising activities. Spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils are encouraged to engage in 'deep thinking' facing challenging issues and questions. In RE, a Year 5/6 class reflected on the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane with pupils making comments and asking questions at a high level. The RE curriculum is well-planned and delivered contributing to the Christian character of the school. As well as learning about Christianity, pupils learn about other faiths and their impact on society. The school has identified the need to review RE to ensure that it has greater integration with other areas of the curriculum.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils describe worship as one of the best things about the school, and look forward to the daily gathering to light the candle and pray together. One pupil said worship is 'a chance to stop and meet with God', indicating its importance in the life of the school. Members of the Vale Team Ministry lead worship as well as the Lay Baptist Minister. They lead engaging worship which pupils say helps them to learn more about 'God and following Jesus'. A range of activities during worship includes singing both lively and quiet songs, responses, lighting a candle, story, reflection, and prayer. This enables the pupils to be active and fully engaged throughout in distinctively Christian worship that embraces the school's values and successfully promotes them in children's lives. Each classroom has a collective worship board so that thoughts from worship can be placed there to help everyone think about the theme of worship throughout the day. Regular school worship is held in church and in the Baptist chapel so making both buildings comfortable and accessible to all pupils and their families. All pupils and staff attend worship, and many parents attend the Friday services, highlighting the importance of worshipping as a school community. The Easter service was well attended and much appreciated by parents. Liturgical colours are used on worship displays and pupils can talk about purple as a colour that shows 'we are building up to something really important'. Pupils enthusiastically take an active part in helping tell the Bible story, answering questions, and leading or joining in with responses

and prayer, all of which contributes to their understanding of Jesus Christ and the Trinity. Children are consistently positive about worship, are able to remember themes, stories and Biblical teaching, and fluently describe how it made them feel and what it made them think about. Worship is very well-planned and resourced using both published resources and diocesan planning. It is evaluated through pupils' comments and feedback from staff, informing relevant development opportunities. Pupils say they would like to be more involved in the planning of worship so that they could 'think more about Bible stories for themselves'. Pupils are confident about praying both reading prayers and writing their own. They show awareness of prayer as a means of communicating with God so that 'he can answer us when we pray'.

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

Since her arrival four years ago the headteacher and governors have worked consistently to foster and enhance the Christian distinctiveness of the school. It is a community that embraces and serves not only pupils but parents and carers with a Christian vision, ethos and example. Senior leaders see the school as a place that embodies what it means to love God and to want the best for others as well as yourself. The chair of governors, foundation governors, and the parents are exceptionally supportive of the school, working with the staff to provide the best possible education in a clearly Christian environment. The governors and headteacher see the Christian nature of the school as a natural part of the life of the school. Parents hold the school in high regard and are fully involved in developments. As yet there is no formal evaluation of their views of the school as a church school. Relationships with the local church are extremely positive and until his recent retirement the incumbent was a regular contributor to school life. Children and families speak enthusiastically of activities at the local Baptist chapel that they are able to attend. There is exceptional loyalty towards the headteacher from all members of this school community. Staff are encouraged in their own personal development. A student teacher had chosen to take a leadership course in RE in her final year at university as a direct consequence of being part of the Hose school community. The school values support offered by the diocese and other local schools where good practice is shared. Diocesan training has helped the school to focus on key areas to improve its effectiveness as a church school. The self-evaluation shows that the leadership has a thorough and deep understanding of the school, clearly identifies the strengths of the school as a Christian community, and where it needs to develop further. Considerable progress has been made in addressing the issues of the last report particularly in the area of planning and leading collective worship. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met. The commitment of the leadership, along with governors and other stakeholders, place the school in an outstanding position to continue to flourish as a church school.