



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The Methodist Church

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Michael and All Angels Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Brookside, Rearsby,
Leicestershire
LE7 4YB

Diocese: Leicester

Local authority: Leicestershire

Dates of inspection: 14th February 2014

Date of last inspection: 27th November 2008

School's unique reference number: 138902

Headteacher: Mr Neil Bardsley

Inspector's name and number: Mr D G Jones, No. 166

School context

This school serves a rural community a few miles from Leicester. There are 103 pupils on roll, mainly of white, British heritage. The school has converted to an academy in November 2012.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael and All Angels as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The school's aims and values are carefully based on the Christian gospel and staff, governors and pupils are committed to them;
- High standards are expected and achieved in learning and behaviour;
- Governors play a structured and strong role in monitoring and encouraging development;
- There are very strong links with the church and vicar;
- Religious education and collective worship are of an extremely high standard and contribute to spiritual and moral development.

Areas to improve

- Arrange suitable INSET for teachers leading collective worship;
- Further develop spirituality across the school;
- Take advantage of suitable opportunities for INSET in RE.

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

The whole school contributed to a set of values based firmly on the Christian gospel and this is now embedded in school life. Each term the school focuses on two values. Achievement certificates are used to show recognition of values demonstrated by pupils. At harvest each class acted out a value to demonstrate its impact on their lives. Each class has a reflection space/display board with which children interact. There is a large display by the main entrance which displays the Christian character of the school. There is another display board by the hall

which asks children to respond to deep questions. The school was commended at the Church School Awards 2012. These values contribute to pupils' excellent behaviour and they are conscious of their impact on their lives. Because of their work to combat bullying, the anti-bullying team was awarded the Diana Award in 2013. One teacher offers a counselling and listening time each fortnight for children who have worries or problems and pupils find this very helpful. They also operate a buddy system where older pupils help younger ones. Attainment and achievement for all groups are of a high standard, are still improving and are significantly higher than national or county levels. Special attention is given to ensure that the needs of lesser and more able learners are met and this was done in all the lessons observed. Spiritual and moral development is outstanding and school values, collective worship and religious education contribute to this. Pupils have asked for a further, deeper understanding of spirituality and this is being arranged. There is an excellent link with the church and the vicar makes an outstanding contribution as priest and foundation governor and is greatly appreciated by pupils. Governors are deeply involved in monitoring and encouraging the Christian ethos. Parents have a high regard for the school and the achievement and behaviour of pupils. Understanding of other faiths and cultures is strengthened by a link with a school in the city of Leicester and visits to places of worship.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is the focal point in the school's daily life and follows the themes suggested by the diocese and also reflects the school's values, and Open the Book resources are used. The Bible is given a significant place. Pupils have asked for a better chronology of the Bible and as a result, a story from the Lion Storyteller Bible is read every Monday complemented by a timeline display. All teachers lead worship in turn, the vicar leads once a fortnight, GenR8 (a Baptist group) lead once a term and a local convent school have established a new link for leading worship in the school. A table with a candle and a cross which is covered with a cloth in the appropriate liturgical colour forms a focus for worship. Music is played as pupils enter and leave quietly and orderly. Teachers and pupils have an active role in leading prayer and Christian songs are sung with gusto. The Lord's prayer and a school prayer are said from time to time. Prayer is also said before lunch by each class, and pupils contribute to a prayer board in the hall. Services for major festivals held in the church are led by the school with support from the vicar who also leads other services throughout the year. Year 6 children have complete ownership of the leavers' service when a reflection stone symbolises Jesus' presence with them on their life journey. Parents and members of the community are invited to church services and these are always very well attended. Easter services have in turn been told through the eyes of women and of Peter. Pupils enjoy collective worship, especially worship in church. They feel that the vicar is always fun. One said 'collective worship is so much fun that you forget it is collective worship, but prayer time reminds you again.' They like being actively involved in worship and feel that it has an effect on their lives. One said 'It had made him believe in God,' and another that 'It made him care and love other people, and made him pray to God, and that he wasn't really interested in Him before,' and another that 'It had helped him to make friends.' The foundation governors and the vicar play an important part in monitoring collective worship and reporting to the full governing body. Parents appreciate the worship opportunities offered by the school and find that pupils talk at home about the experience.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The school follows the county agreed syllabus alongside the diocesan syllabus with added units in years 5 and 6 on values and spirituality. Attainment in each year group has improved substantially over the last four years and is in tune with or higher than national expectations. All teaching is good or outstanding with a range of teaching methods and activities. Careful attention is given to the needs of children of different abilities. During the inspection lessons on creation, temptation and parables were observed. Pupils were encouraged to think and to apply the lessons to their own lives and to those of other faiths. There was very good

participation and pupils worked well together. Assessment and monitoring are very thorough. The headteacher, as co-ordinator, observes lessons and trawls books. Lessons are also observed by foundation governors and reports made to the governing body. Staff assess and level achievements of the children at the end of each unit. The Voice of the Learner is used as a measure of children's knowledge, an evaluation of the subject and the impact on pupils. A big RE Day is held which enriches pupils' learning and understanding. A Hindu lady contributed and explained and illustrated various aspects and practices of her faith. Pupils found it wonderful to have the opportunity to talk to her, whereas previously they may merely have passed her in the street. Pupils have also visited places of worship of other faiths and a school in the city of Leicester, which has helped them to remember what they have learnt and to see a very different community. They feel that religious education helps to provide a framework for living and to see Jesus as telling them more about God. Staff training in aspects of religious education is a high priority; the school has regular RE staff meetings and network meetings are looked to for a deeper knowledge of RE. The vicar makes a valuable contribution in offering informal training for staff.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school as a Christian school and this is reflected in the school values that have been agreed by staff, governors and pupils. The headteacher and other teachers work as a team. All members of staff have responsibility for one or more subject area and regularly coach or mentor each other through peer observations and team teaching. They meet regularly with the staff of the other nine schools in the partnership to which the school belongs. One teacher is a moderator for the local authority with regards to early years foundation stage and another is a specialist leader of education for maths and has supported schools in the partnership and beyond. The governors work to an effective structure, are trained and play a strong role in the leadership of the school. They monitor performance and achievement thoroughly and support the headteacher and staff. Many of them are parents and links with the parent body are very good. A good response is made to questionnaires which are issued to parents annually. Governors and staff interview children for their opinions and the school council plays an important role. Self-evaluation involves all groups in the school community. All stakeholders are involved in strategic planning, including the development plan. The vicar makes an outstanding contribution to the school.