



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



 The Methodist Church

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Parson Cross (VA) Primary School

Halifax Road
Sheffield
S6 1LB

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Diocese: Sheffield

Local authority: Sheffield

Date of inspection: 13th November, 2014

Date of last inspection: January, 2010

School's unique reference number: 107107

Headteacher: Helen Richardson

Inspector's name and number: Kerry Palmer (60)

School context

Parson Cross is an average sized primary school serving a mixed socio-economic outer city community. Almost all children are of white British heritage. The proportion attracting pupil premium funding or with special needs is average. The parish church is walking distance from the school. The headteacher leads an established staff team. The school has recently been awarded its fifth consecutive Quality Mark.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Parson Cross (VA) Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Explicit Christian values impact very positively on pupil achievement, relationships and well-being in a welcoming, inclusive and loving atmosphere.
- Resolute Christian leadership, recognising each child as a unique part of God's creation, constantly striving for the best possible education for every child.
- Committed governors who successfully promote the school's development as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Explore ways to widen the children's experience of diverse communities, cultures and faiths so as to deepen their appreciation of the richness of humanity.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship in order to increase their active involvement and ownership.
- Investigate ways to strengthening parental appreciation of Christian values as Bible based strengthening their commitment to the school's church foundation.

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

All aspects of school life are underpinned by its church school ethos. Christian values of trust

and endurance promote determination and enthusiasm ensuring that pupil progress is good or better. Christian love and service is evident in the commitment of staff ensuring the best for all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils make excellent progress, children with disabilities are fully integrated. Relationships amongst all in the school community are open, positive and mutually supportive. Christian forgiveness and reconciliation is at the core of the school's very effective behaviour policy. Older children keenly applying for posts as playground mediators; they all behave very well at work and play. Careful consideration has been given to embedding effective spiritual development opportunities throughout the new curriculum. This, along with religious education that connects with children's lives, good collective worship and a range of enrichment opportunities, impacts very positively in the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of children who are hardworking, confident, feel safe and are happy. They love school, attendance is above average. Children have a strong sense of fairness, understanding the Christian value of justice, they talk about the teaching of Jesus. Their support for a range of charities and good causes develops empathy for the less fortunate. The fruits of God's creation were celebrated by all the school and a packed congregation of parents and friends at the Harvest service in church, then gifts of food sent to the cathedral project for the homeless in the city. These activities help the children to appreciate diversity. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to interact with children from contrasting backgrounds or different countries.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is at the centre of school life and promotes Christian action in pupils' lives. Children say that the focus on Bible stories, 'How Jesus taught us to live,' and prayers in worship help them at school and home. Children remember school prayers and appreciate opportunities to reflect and offer their personal prayers in a variety of worship settings, deepening spirituality. Children regularly write prayers but these are not sufficiently celebrated in class displays. The school meets together each school day, but the gathering is called assembly rather than worship. A variety of strategies and approaches are used in the well planned programme of themes, delivered by the headteacher, deputy and teachers. All have a Christian focus, but more could be done to support continuity through each week and embed key ideas. Celebration assemblies praise achievements which recognise a range of God given gifts and talents. Children play a full part in preparing and presenting celebration and festival services in the parish church which is also well used for curricular activities. Parents and friends pack the church and speak of the moving atmosphere. Children also gain an insight into Anglican tradition and the church's yearly calendar. However, there is insufficient opportunity for children to plan, deliver and evaluate worship throughout the year. There is regular reference to the Trinity both in worship, prayer and RE so that children have a developing understanding of God in three persons. There is little formal evaluation by the wider school community of the impact of worship. A foundation governor has recently become a link for RE and worship but formal reviews and feedback are still developing.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards in RE reflect the good standards of other core subjects. Children's workbooks show that there is clear progression and continuity throughout the school. The recently adopted scheme of work forms a sound basis for further development. It has been thoughtfully introduced with appropriate staff training and resourcing. This is already enthusing staff and stimulating very good lessons where learning is clearly taking place. Tasks are differentiated so that the less able receive additional support whilst the more able are challenged. Teaching standards are good; a range of imaginative strategies successfully engage and challenge pupils who clearly enjoy lessons and learn a lot. A new assessment and tracking system accompanies the new RE curriculum which, along with an increased focus on quality of marking has a positive influence on planning and progress. Whilst thoroughly grounded in Christian teaching, appropriate material about other key faiths is taught eliciting respect and

understanding. As an example, Harvest celebrations included learning about Sukkot, the Jewish equivalent. Whilst taught as a separate subject, links with other curriculum areas are regularly made. Older children debating 'Why the German people followed Hitler' spent some time exploring Judaism. There is much thoughtful reflection promoting spiritual development. Responsibility for the leadership of RE is passing from the headteacher to a teacher with a teaching and learning responsibility, an indication of empowerment and succession planning.

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

The headteacher, in partnership with staff and governors, work as a collaborative team to successfully promote a distinctively Christian vision seen in every aspect of school life. Governors know the school well, foundation governors are selected thoughtfully, 'We challenge with love' one commented. They are clear that the school's church foundation complements the drive for academic achievement. Christian distinctiveness is a standing item on governor agendas but formal monitoring of RE and worship is just emerging. The school's self-evaluation is accurate but governors have not been fully involved in its review. Professional development is actively promoted with all staff, for example, a teaching assistant is encouraged to undertake teacher training and three teachers have been given additional teaching and learning responsibilities. Parents hold the school and its leadership in high esteem, valuing its inclusive, warm family atmosphere. Discussing values they spoke of 'a loving atmosphere' and 'good modelling' by staff and children who 'leave thoroughly rooted', though they did not articulate the Christian basis for these values. 'They are regularly consulted by questionnaire and a parents' council has recently been initiated. The parish makes a significant contribution to school life, the two working closely together. Both school and parish are keen to develop this partnership further. The quality of school leadership has been recognised by both the local authority and diocese and used to support other schools. RE and collective worship exceed statutory requirements, there has been significant progress since the last inspection and the potential for further positive development is excellent.

SIAMS report November 2014 Parson Cross CofE (VA) Primary School, Sheffield S6 1LB