



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Beresford Memorial Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Novi Lane
Leek
Staffordshire
ST13 6NR

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 3 December 2015

Date of last inspection: 15 November 2010

School's unique reference number: 124340

Headteacher: Caroline Quinn

Inspector's name and number: Marianne Phillips 586

School context

Beresford Memorial Church of England (VA) is an expanding First School that proclaims its Christian status to the area it serves. In August, the vicar was appointed to another Church in Northampton. Since then representatives from St Luke's and St Paul's Churches Leek Team Ministry have worked closely with the school to sustain its strong church links. The 164 pupils on roll are almost all from white British backgrounds. Forty three percent, a very high proportion, are supported through Pupil Premium Funding. The percentage of pupils judged to have special educational needs is slightly higher than schools nationally.

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

- The strong Christian witness of the headteacher and her commitment to every member of this church school family;
- Explicit Christian values that enable all to "love and learn together with God";
- The nurturing relationships fostered through a 'sense of team' using the teachings of Jesus as a guide and role model;
- The ways in which this school proclaims its Christian distinctiveness to all.

Areas to improve

- Develop the role of the religious education (RE) link governor to support the work of the new minister in formally monitoring the quality of the teaching of RE on a regular basis.
- Sustain the effective evaluation of worship and use those findings to drive the distinctiveness of this church school.

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

This outstanding church school, as explained by the foundation governors, strives to equip children to enter into a living faith with God. They do this by creating an environment where

children of all abilities thrive as they respond to the question “who is God calling me to be?” On the day of inspection over eighty parents and carers attended Christmas lunch with the children. Those questioned, without exception, praised the work of the school and the support they provide for their children. A real sense of community prevailed. Explicit Christian values draw on the teachings and example of Jesus to shape every aspect of daily life, guiding, nurturing and supporting, through the warm, loving relationships that exist. As pupils from the school council, worship leadership team and classroom representatives explained, “we respect and follow the Golden Rule –do to others what you want them to do to you.....we feel safe because the teachers help us to deal with any issues that worry us....our Christian values are very important because we are a church school and we believe in God and Jesus”. They emphasise there is no bullying and are keen to share that “prayer is very important because when we pray we are talking to God. Jesus is His son and He is very special”. These views are reflected in the wide variety of prayers displayed in classrooms and around the school. The team rewards help and support pupils in their daily choices generating a school environment that is calm but exciting. Personalised opportunities for learning are initiated through the ‘Homework Challenges’ for all children. Evidenced through the vibrant ‘Dream Catchers’ reflecting the ‘Hope’ shared by the children and their families and the ‘Photo-frames’ of special people remembered. Display boards reflect the care and commitment of staff to create displays that celebrate, stimulate and confirm that “my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place”. In so many ways the school is providing sustenance for spiritual, physical and academic growth. The views of parents strongly endorse the impact of the concentration on Christian values on their children. They appreciate the strong leadership of the headteacher as the driving force of the school ably supported by the senior leadership team and a committed staff. Effective teaching and targeted support for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds underpins the learning. As a result attainment exceeds national expectations, despite the fact that many pupils enter the school with skills in communication, language, literacy and numeracy, well below national standards. Pupils’ progress is tracked through effective systems and pupil premium funding is creatively used to provide additional support, where needed. The enriched curriculum and extensive programme of clubs enable pupils to have ‘choices’ weekly to attend ‘Christian Club’, cook, garden, dance or become gymnasts. Breakfast club, run daily, is also very well attended. Foundation governors in the absence of a permanent minister, actively support the school in its work to make a difference to the lives of its pupils and families. In addition, St Luke’s and St Paul’s Churches Leek Team Ministry have sustained the strong links which have been forged with the church, whilst the process of appointing a new minister is undertaken. One example of this is the ‘open door’ opportunities offered by St Luke’s last summer, which proved to be popular with the children. Links have been established with Kenya, to give pupils opportunities to widen their experiences of different cultures, beliefs and multi-faith approaches. The headteacher is working to expand this by developing a partnership with a school in Stoke to further enhance the pupils’ understanding. In addition, visits and visitors are used to further enrich the quality of learning. Pupils are encouraged to be caring young citizens through their fund raising and support of others. In addition, the school works closely with the local food bank to issue vouchers to families in need of this support. In these, and so many other ways, this church school lives out its Christian values, through its distinctiveness influencing and improving the lives of their pupils and the community at large.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The very good act of worship, led by the headteacher and pupils from the Year 4 worship team, welcomed everyone assembled into “*the presence of the Lord*”. The school family confidently responded “*who loves us all*”. An atmosphere, conducive to worship had been created through music and visual images and this was effectively sustained through the lighting of the 3 candles, representing the Trinity and witnessing Christ’s promise of ‘hope’ for the future. Pupils, in response to the skilled questioning of the headteacher, confirmed their growing knowledge and understanding of Anglican tradition and their enthusiasm to engage with the worship experiences. The school leaders and governors, plan to broaden the

children's experiences by introducing Eucharist worship and teaching. This is a good idea building more opportunities for the pupils to grow in their relationship with Christ. Prayer and reflection were used to create a spiritual atmosphere, further enhanced by the singing of the Benediction. In these ways the worship set the tone for the day and an excellent foundation for the day's activities. Worship is central to school life and is strongly influencing the lives of the school family. As the children explained, "we all like going to church and worship...prayer is important because God listens...He is in my heart and through prayer you are a better person...when you pray you feel good because Jesus is holding your hand". Pupils regularly lead class worship and are encouraged to be responsible for aspects of whole school worship. They record their opinions of worship through their 'reflection journals', which indicate the depth of their thinking. As one child recorded, "I love my teachers because they are glorious". Pupils behave excellently. They display a level of maturity in their prayerful responses, evidenced through the use of their class reflection areas. Pupils attend church services at least half termly and parents are encouraged to attend. Those questioned expressed their enjoyment and appreciation of the experiences, which they feel are "pitched at their children's level and are age appropriate". The quality of worship is monitored rigorously by the RE link governor and the RE coordinator. They also gather the views of the pupils about their experiences providing opportunities for 'pupil voice' to be heard. In these ways the school is successfully ensuring worship experience nurtures the spiritual development of the pupils and is of high quality.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards in RE are good, in line with outcomes in other core subjects. Progress for most pupils is good. The quality of the RE observed was very good. Teachers creatively facilitated opportunities for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 to engage with and respond to the learning experiences. The younger pupils grappled with the question, "do we always have to put our hands together and close our eyes when we pray?" The teacher enabled them to engage with 8 focused, active prayerful opportunities, including 'bubble prayers' and reflection to spiritual music to help shape their thoughts and opinions. The older pupils reflected upon Christian art depicting the 'Nativity story' and the birth of Jesus. They were challenged to raise questions and to reflect upon the symbolism. In both lessons pupils displayed a level of maturity beyond age expectation and were offered many opportunities to learn about and from the teaching. The school follows guidance from the Diocese about the planning and assessment procedures used and has received training from the diocesan advisor as part of the Service Level Agreement. It is planned for through a themed approach and monitored by the RE coordinator through regular discussion with pupils and staff. The RE link governor has worked closely with the school, in his new role, since the summer. The school plans to develop this role to enable formal monitoring of the quality of RE. This is a good idea, providing evidence of learning outcomes to ensure RE is effective in enabling pupils to explore faith issues that are important in their daily lives.

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

The headteacher provides outstanding Christian witness, living out daily the values central to her belief. The 'open door' policy she has introduced, since her appointment in 2011 gives families access to her care and support in their lives. The senior leadership team, which has been restructured through the appointment of the Early Years/RE coordinator works closely with her to drive school improvement. She is strongly supported by the staff, foundation governors, vicar and other spiritual leaders visiting the school. They know their school strengths and are fully committed to the pupils and the families they serve. Parents comment about the warm welcome they receive and the loving care that nurtures their children and provides them with focused support in times of need. Effective self-evaluation procedures are embedded and generate strategic plans to address areas of development. Learning is fun. The youngest children, on their 'WOW' board share 'Jesus is their super hero' and are encouraged to play creatively in the 'Nativity Area' engaging with the characters of the scene set. Whilst the older pupils are guided to engage with 'The Secrets of Success' or to represent the

Christian symbols of the school badge or key people of Britain. They are challenged and supported by a well-planned rich curriculum and many extra-curricular opportunities, offered to engage and excite and as a result attendance is high. The vision is explicit and shared by all. Training underpins the process of growth and improvement and is made available to staff and governors, positively supported by the Diocese. The developmental points from the previous inspection have been met. The links between the church, school and community are very strong, despite the absence of a permanent minister. The school is highly respected and, the newly formed, nursery for 2 year olds, is full. This year the reception places available, were unable to meet the demand from applications. The Local Authority is strongly supportive of this excellent school and it is also appreciated by stakeholders who acknowledge the importance of this school and the difference it makes in pupils' lives.

SIAMS report December 2015, Beresford Memorial CE VA Primary, Leek ST13 6NR