



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ireby Church of England Primary School

Ireby, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 1DS

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Carlisle
Local authority: Cumbria
Dates of inspection: 14th January 2015
Date of last inspection: 12th February 2010
School's unique reference number: 112251
Headteacher: Alison Dickinson
Inspector's name and number: Penny Hollander 526



School context

Ireby voluntary controlled Church of England school is a small rural primary school with 50 pupils on roll. All children are of white British ethnicity. They come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The number of pupils with special educational needs is low as is the proportion of those disadvantaged children, supported by the pupil premium. The Ofsted report of December 2014 graded the school as good. The current headteacher is due to go on maternity leave from February half term this year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ireby as a Church of England school are good

- Very positive relationships between all members of the school community which enable all children to thrive, regardless of their background or abilities.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher which ensures that the Christian vision of the school is clear in its daily life.
- Mutually beneficial links between the school, church and local community.

Areas to improve

- Governors develop monitoring of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school to ensure that this contributes effectively to strategic planning.
- Ensure that Christian values in school are rooted in Christian teaching so that all stakeholders recognise how they contribute to the school's distinctiveness.

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

The school's Christian values are evident in its daily life. Relationships are characterised by love, care and respect. This means that all children, including the most vulnerable, feel happy safe, and confident within school. "We like school because its one happy family and we all look after one another", said one pupil. They respect their teachers who are "always willing to help you and make learning fun". Children achieve well and make good progress. The way in which the school nurtures all pupils contributes to good school attendance which is above the national average. Behaviour is excellent. The Christian character of the school contributes effectively to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. A wide variety of educational experiences mean that they gain respect and understanding of the lives of others which may be different from their own. Visits to different places of worship including a synagogue and Buddhist temple reinforce this, as do focus days on India and Africa which are shared with other local schools. Older pupils benefit from residential visits to cities such as Liverpool and York and can compare the cathedrals in these cities with their own local church. Spiritual development has a high priority. Children respond thoughtfully to opportunities for reflection given in collective worship, religious education (RE) and other curriculum areas. RE contributes well to the Christian character of the school by making links in units of work with specific Christian values. Older children have contributed to a "Values Book" and link these with Biblical stories. However, not all stakeholders have a fully developed understanding of how these values contribute to the school's Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship plays an important part in school life. All members of the school see worship as a special time in the day. The recent developments to the worship space have contributed to this. These include a new focus table and displayed prayers for greeting and dismissal. Children enjoy worship and say that they "learn lots of things we didn't know before about God and the Bible". They respond enthusiastically and are actively engaged through a range of activities, including prayer, singing and role-play. They can link what they learn to the school's Christian values. On one occasion when the Christian understanding of hope was discussed, a pupil explained, "God gives us hope and faith to believe in him". Collective worship develops children's understanding of Christian beliefs about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Opportunities to reflect and respond help to develop children's spirituality at these times. Some children add their own prayers to the Prayer Tree. Collective worship planning is thorough, supportive and involves all those who lead worship. Children enjoy leading parts of worship. They say that this helps them to know and understand more about Christian faith. Pupils talk appreciatively about their role in planning and leading services held in church at different times in the church year and at the end of term. They are particularly proud of the part they played in last year's Remembrance Day service. Children evaluate worship and this informs future planning. Changes made in response to pupils' evaluations include the use of a wider range of Bible stories and more drama activities. They like the different styles and approaches of the range of collective worship leaders and this variety broadens their understanding of wider church traditions.

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

The headteacher is a strong Christian leader who articulates a clear Christian vision for the

school. All members of the school community support this. Christian values are key to school life. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance. As a result of attending diocesan training their understanding of the distinctive Christian character of a church school has developed and effective monitoring is beginning to contribute to strategic planning. The leadership team is aware of the need to plan for future leadership of the school as a church school and used diocesan support in the appointment of an acting headteacher. This is so that the Christian vision for the school is continued. Governors ensure that collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. Links with the church and local community are strong. The school is integral to the life of the village and pupils regularly take part in church and community events. The church values the involvement of school staff and children in the monthly family service. Local residents appreciate the school's involvement in regular community events. Children benefit from the help they have in school from the church and community. Local people listen to readers and support after school clubs. Pupils recognise that their opinions are valued. They enjoy the responsibilities they have in daily school life, such as older pupils looking after younger ones and the choice of after school clubs. The school council organises coffee mornings and book sales to raise money for charities and school. Effective partnerships increase children's awareness of wider communities. These include links with other local schools, a large Church of England school in Liverpool and one in India. Parents are very supportive of the school and all that it provides for the development of their children.

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