



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Nicholas Voluntary Controlled Middle School

Main Street, Pinvin, Pershore. WR10 2ER

Previous inspection grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 14 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 17 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 116861

Headteacher: Andrew Best

Inspector's name and number: C. Ann Stone NS812

The school elected to have religious education included as part of this inspection.

School context

St Nicholas VC Middle School is situated in a rural location with 310 children on roll. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage with a high proportion of children from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. St Nicholas entered into a Federation with Pinvin Church of England First School in 2014 resulting in an executive headteacher and one governing body responsible for both schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Nicholas VC Middle School as a Church of England school are good.

- The ability of all stakeholders to articulate and promote a vision for the school rooted in Christian values which has an impact on the lives of all members of the school community.
- Children's understanding and articulation of Christian values which have a significant impact on their daily lives and achievements.
- The inspirational headteacher who has a clear vision and strategy for moving the school forward as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Further develop the interpretation of spirituality, so that children are engaged in a range of spiritual experiences allowing them to deepen their own personal spirituality.
- Enable children to gain more detailed knowledge of Anglican traditions, the seasons of the church's year and the Eucharist to enable them to talk about them with a greater degree of understanding.
- Ensure that learning about Christianity as a world faith is incorporated into religious

education so that children develop a respect for diversity and difference.

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

Christian values permeate the whole life of the school and create an ethos that enables children to achieve academically and socially. Displays around the school are a constant reminder of the importance of the Christian values the school aspires to. The motto of 'Together – We Inspire, Discover and Achieve' is clearly understood and articulated by all stakeholders and children are able to link it to the three fold message of the Trinity. The behaviour of the children is of the highest standard and relationships are consistently attributed to the Christian character of the school. Vulnerable children are nurtured carefully throughout the school day with initiatives that clearly demonstrate the Christian values of care and compassion. Children understand the need and have the ability to put others before themselves. Fundraising supports local, national and global charities and children understand that Christian values are at the heart of their fundraising. An explanation for this given by a child was that 'it fits in with Jesus' teaching'. The development point from the previous inspection of enabling children to broaden their understanding and appreciation of other beliefs and cultures has partially been addressed through working with the local Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community. A sense of community fellowship (Koinomia) has been developed which has resulted in better attendance, academic improvement and harmonious relationships amongst the whole school community. Still to be developed is a deeper understanding and appreciation of other faiths and cultures. Parents consider themselves to be an intrinsic part of the school community. Christian values and Bible stories are regularly discussed at home and parents believe this can be directly attributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of spirituality and identified is the need for more provision of opportunities within the curriculum to deepen this understanding, enabling them to make their own links between beliefs, practices and Christian values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective worship is important to the life of the school and is seen to contribute and support the school's Christian distinctiveness. The school leader with responsibility for Christian distinctiveness ensures worship is planned to incorporate Christian values, Bible stories, reflection time and prayer which lead to a rich and diverse experience of worship. Following an area for development from the last inspection to improve singing in worship, new resources and strategies have been introduced. The impact is seen in the levels of enjoyment and engagement and in the understanding by children that music is a core part of worship. All teaching staff lead worship and see it as a way to demonstrate their commitment as a team to promote the Christian values of the school. 'Open the Book' worship, led by visitors and assisted by children is well received and has a direct impact on the life of the children. The parish priest also leads collective worship regularly. A cross and candle are displayed on a worship table and children are able to explain what they mean to Christians. A coloured cloth to reflect the seasons of the Church year is also used but children are unable to explain the significance of this. The religious education and collective worship group (CREW) have a major role in the development of worship. They plan and lead collective worship, have written the school prayer linking the Christian values and the United Nations' Charter for human rights and monitor class based worship. Children are confident in their knowledge and responsibilities and regularly speak to class teachers regarding class based worship. An example given was that one class teacher had the wrong Christian value on display and was asked by the CREW group to replace it with the correct one. The lack of hall space limits parents attending school worship but they are invited to all services held in Pershore Abbey. Classrooms have a 'reflection area' containing inspirational sayings and other artefacts. Recently introduced are 'Prayer Bags' to help children develop a deeper understanding of prayer. Reflective areas outside the school building enable worship to extend beyond the

confines of a set time and place. Children are confident at explaining the importance of these spaces as a place they can go to when they need time to think and ask God for his help. Some children have an understanding of the Eucharist but identified is the need for whole school understanding of the importance it plays in the lives of Christians.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

The school has clearly acknowledged the importance of religious education (RE) and it has a high profile within the curriculum. It is recognised by staff, governors and children as being important to the life of the school. Parents remark how often the children talk about their RE lessons and regularly want to explore their learning further at home. The RE coordinator is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and attends diocesan training regularly. She ensures standards are high, lessons challenging and passes training on to staff when appropriate. Specialist based RE teachers deliver lessons ensuring that planning is creative, varied and inspiring. Children actively engage in their learning and recognise that it contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their understanding of Christianity is secure but identified by the school is the need to continue to develop their understanding of diversity within other faith groups. They have little understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith and this has been highlighted as an area for development Their questioning skills are highly developed and help them develop their understanding of the impact religion has on others. Progress and achievement of all children in RE is tracked using Epiphany RE and evidence shows that the majority of children are working at age related expectations. Teaching staff are monitored by senior leaders and feedback leads to an improvement in learning. Governors are not yet involved in formal monitoring and evaluation of RE but have identified this as an area for development.

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

Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and with a highly supportive team of staff and governors, there is a clear Christian ethos within the school which is subject to continuous review and development. Governors know the school and articulate well the understanding of their role as strategic leaders of a church school. They appreciate the exciting journey of governing a Federation of two schools and acknowledge the importance of maintaining the Christian distinctiveness of each. Children know the governors and are able to ask them searching questions related to the Christian distinctiveness of the school which they are able to answer with confidence. Parents know their concerns are dealt with efficiently and sensitively and link this to the Christian character of the school. They comment that the Christian values shared by the headteacher and staff contribute to behaviour management and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. Parents praise the achievement of school leaders in working closely with the GRT community and the success it has had on the whole community through the development of fellowship, tolerance and understanding. The development of all staff is achieved through individual support, attendance at diocesan training and mentoring and support of each other. These actions have a positive and shared impact on the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Leaders and governors ensure both worship and religious education meets statutory requirements. The supportive relationships between all members of the school community are clearly rooted in Christian values, providing a school which is both distinctive and effective.