



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist** Church 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bishop Wilson CofE VA Primary School

10 Craig Croft
Chelmund's Cross
Chelmsley Wood
Birmingham
B37 7TR

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Birmingham

Local authority: Solihull

Dates of inspection: 5th March 2015

Date of last inspection: 5th November 2009

School's unique reference number: 104105

Headteacher: Jonathan Kirk Incumbent: Interregnum

Inspector's name and number: Helen Gilbert 633

School context

Bishop Wilson VA Primary School serves an area of high unemployment in North Solihull. Most pupils are from White British families and a higher than average proportion are eligible for pupil premium funding. The school supports a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Since the last inspection the school has moved into a new building creatively designed around the needs of its pupils. The new school shares its site with key community teams and is physically joined to St Andrew's Church. A removable partition between the school hall and the church sanctuary provides an integrated worship space.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Wilson CofE Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding commitment of the head teacher, senior leaders and governors to ensure that the Christian character of the school is vibrant, living and growing.
- The commitment of all staff to inspire every child, as a child of God, to have the highest expectations without any limitations.
- The standards achieved by pupils in religious education.
- The role played by the foundation governors who know their school very well indeed and provide both support and challenge.

Areas to improve

- Enhance children's spiritual development by encouraging them to listen to God and reflect on their responses to being in His presence
- Forge a strong working relationship with the new incumbent, when appointed, in order to strengthen the engagement of the church with the school's pupils and their families.
- Generate links with schools that serve culturally diverse faith communities

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

One of the Bishop Wilson School's core values is trust and this is explained through the words 'We have faith and confidence in Jesus and each other'. This building of trust and confidence underpins all that the school does for its pupils and as a result they are confident, articulate learners who trust one another and respect each other's differences. The school's other core values – respect, excellence, honesty, enjoyment, collaboration, friendship and resilience - are referred to daily and through collective worship and religious education (RE) and are linked continually to the example and teachings of Jesus. With Jesus as one of their most important role models, pupils demonstrate exceptionally high standards of behaviour and enjoy positive, caring relationships. Without exception pupils affirm that what they learn through worship and RE influences their attitudes and behaviour. Within this context pupils respond positively to encouragement to raise their personal expectations and achieve more. This level of challenge is reflected in teaching that expects pupils to exercise higher order thinking skills. As a result they learn increasingly to think laterally and can suggest a wide range of answers to open-ended questioning, sharing their thoughts and ideas with remarkable maturity. Pupils themselves affirm that they are asked to *'think about God and about big questions'*. Parents value the fact that *'children are able to say what they think'* about a range of issues. This creates an exciting climate for learning which, together with rigorous tracking of progress each half term, has successfully accelerated the progress made by pupils of all abilities and raised standards of achievement. School leaders set challenging targets for pupils and there is a belief that every child is a child of God and there is no ceiling to what any child can achieve. Despite low baseline attainment on entry, validated data for 2014 shows that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Maths at the end of Key Stage 2 has increased by 11 per cent over the last two years and exceeds local and national figures. There is also a marked increase in the number of pupils achieving Level 5 and 9% of pupils achieved Level 6 in maths. RE makes a very significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. They say that what they learn challenges them to consider and value the different beliefs and cultures of other people. As one child said, *'If you met a person with a different religion you would understand and respect what they have.'* The school has identified the need to develop this understanding further by forging links with schools serving culturally diverse communities. Pupils readily speak of their efforts to raise money for a range of charities and of their link with a school in Malawi and can link the importance of generosity with the teachings and example of Jesus.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is a very important part of the day at Bishop Wilson School. Themes reflect the Anglican calendar and as a result pupils have a good understanding of most festivals of the Christian year. Weekly themes are closely linked to the school's values and enable pupils to explore these and consider how Jesus would think and act. The person of Jesus is central to worship and pupils relate readily to him as a person. Their understanding of the Holy Trinity is less clearly developed. Pupils affirm that worship influences their thinking and actions. Two pupils described how hearing the story of Adam and Eve made them realise that *'lying doesn't get you anywhere'* and can *'get you into more trouble.'* They can describe the importance of Lent and many have related this to their own lives by giving up something during this time. Prayer has an important place in the school day and pupils frequently write their own prayers. Prayer and reflection areas in classrooms and shared areas are a visible reminder that God is present and that life has a spiritual dimension. Most pupils are able to talk about the key elements of prayer – saying sorry, asking for help, saying thank you and requesting help for others. Pupils participate in worship in a range of settings – as a whole school, in phases and in classrooms and fortnightly they worship in church. During whole school worship children are engaged through good story telling and the use of ICT and as a result they participate enthusiastically by responding to questions, through role play, singing, praying and sharing the Peace together. Recording sheets outside each classroom are an effective way for pupils to record the content of worship and the lessons they have learned. This could be developed further to include their responses about their relationship with God, being in his presence, experiencing a sense of awe and wonder.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards achieved in RE by the end of Key Stage 2 are at least as high as those achieved in other subjects with a significant number of children demonstrating an understanding that exceeds national expectations. This is because school leaders ensure that RE has a very high profile within the school, support the RE co-ordinator and have a well-focused action plan for improvement. The co-ordinator attends leadership-training events and these have increased her knowledge and expectations. She has developed the long term curriculum map and accompanying medium term plans very effectively, ensuring that there is very good coverage of Christianity, yet affording pupils opportunities during each year to develop their understanding of other major faiths. Teaching is tailored to the needs of pupils and offers them a question-based curriculum in which they are able to formulate their own questions and find their own answers. As a result pupils are able to develop their skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation and reflection and learn exceptionally well. They make particularly rapid progress in developing their understanding of Christianity. Children talk with great enthusiasm about RE and can describe how the lessons they take from RE and worship influences their daily actions, responses and relationships. They frequently relate their ideas back to what Jesus would do and how he related to people, including his enemies. Older pupils are able to link the actions and teachings of Jesus both to the school's values and to British values such as democracy. Pupils affirm that teachers often ask them what they think of their lessons. RE is monitored as rigorously and effectively as other curriculum areas by the co-ordinator and one of the assistant head teachers. Lesson observations, scrutiny of books, regular assessments and seeking the views of pupils all inform the school's self-evaluation and lead to continual development and improvement.

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

The head teacher has a strong vision for the school as a distinctive church school and models the Christian values of respect, tolerance, generosity and trust to staff and pupils. He has managed change very effectively. When planning the new build he determined that the building itself should speak of the distinctive Christian character of the school. In achieving this, he has realised the vision of governors and the previous incumbent. At the same time he has continued to determinedly challenge and enable staff to improve their practice and this has resulted in raised standards of achievement. Senior leaders support the head teacher very effectively and ensure that the whole curriculum is underpinned by the school's Christian values. A rigorous self-evaluation cycle ensures governors are confident that the Christian character of the school is now *'more focused'* than ever before and that staff know their pupils very well indeed. As a result they are able to raise children's own expectations and standards are rising. As one parent said, *'They push every child to their full ability....and that bit further.'* Teamwork is well developed amongst staff and as a result there is a shared sense of accountability. This structure supports the work of the RE and Worship Co-ordinator and ensures that both these areas are given a consistently high priority throughout the school. The Children and Family worker provides excellent support for pupils and their families and this has contributed to the trust and respect that parents have for the school. The rigorous programme for staff development ensures that teaching standards are rising and the school is growing its own leaders. Succession planning strategies are in place for both the school's leadership team and the governing body. When underperformance has to be tackled school leaders try to do this in a spirit of support and care. Foundation governors and the chair provide outstanding support and challenge for the school. They now know their school very well and there is a good skills mix on the governing body. They describe how the recently formed governors' scrutiny committee, together with governor training, has enabled them to be *'built into the team'*. They understand the school's data and feel empowered to ask positive yet challenging questions. Pupils develop their leadership skills well as a result of the opportunities provided. School Council members speak confidently about their role and believe they are able to make a significant contribution to the school. Parents affirm that older pupils are given increasing levels of responsibility and helped to make good choices. As a result they are very well prepared for transition to secondary school. Links with the church are growing. The lay reader provides excellent support for the school and makes a significant contribution by supporting worship, inviting pupils to special church services and through Splash, a Christian club for Year I children. The school is looking to develop this relationship further once a new incumbent is appointed.