



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Netherhall St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School**

Rawthorpe Lane  
Rawthorpe  
Huddersfield  
HD5 9NT

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Kirklees

Dates of inspection: 7 July 2016

Date of last inspection: 1 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 107700

Headteacher: Carrie Green

Inspector's name and number: Geraldine Cooper 696

#### **School context**

Netherhall St James Church of England school is a larger than average nursery and infant school catering for 294 three to seven year olds. The school serves the small but densely populated community of Rawthorpe on the outskirts of Huddersfield. Social deprivation is significantly higher than the national average with 47% of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average as is the proportion of pupils from mixed ethnic backgrounds. The school is the only church school in the Netherhall Learning Campus which makes provision for pupils from 3 to 19. The school is managed by a vice principal with responsibility for primary provision. She took up her post in 2011.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Netherhall St James Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

- Clearly defined Christian values have a consistent impact on all members of the school community which is evident in the nurture of all pupils.
- The strong Christian ethos supports the learning and achievement of all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable as a result progress is good, and the majority of pupils achieve in line with or above national expectations.
- Through collective worship and religious education (RE) pupils have a well-developed understanding and appreciation of the significance of Jesus Christ.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Enhance pupils understanding of Christianity as a world faith.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to have an active role in planning and leading collective worship.

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

The school has identified the core Christian values of love, respect, trust and compassion as the foundation of its Christian ethos 'Success for all – learning together in God's love'. These values have been introduced consistently and systematically through collective worship, RE and the wider curriculum. Because they are securely embedded within the school all members of the school community have a strong understanding and appreciation of how they relate to daily life. These values and the wider Christian ethos of the school are described as permeating throughout the campus and impacting on the broader community. This has enhanced the pastoral support of vulnerable pupils across the campus. Strategies for supporting older pupils within the campus are linked closely to their experiences in the infant school, a process which enables them to draw on Christian teachings in times of crisis. All adults within the school proactively model Christian values creating an atmosphere in which pupils play and learn together in an atmosphere of trust and love. The seamless interaction between the school's distinctive Christian values and the rest of the curriculum has ensured that pupils have a high level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which promotes positive learning behaviours. Extended writing creates opportunities for pupils to explore moral and ethical issues which helps them to develop an understanding of right and wrong in a Christian context. Although the majority of pupils enter nursery at a level well below national expectations the high level of targeted support they receive ensures that by the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils achieve in line with or above national expectations. This is consistently ascribed to the Christian values within the school which create an environment in which all pupils flourish. It is evident that school staff at all levels value each child as an individual with their own needs and their own stories so that highly effective strategies are in place for monitoring pupil progress and targeting support which results in the enhanced performance of more vulnerable pupils. The school is a resource provision for pupils with physical disability who are fully integrated into school life. The school is very active in encouraging families to share their child's learning journey. Family learning days have enabled parents and carers to learn alongside their children in a manner which has encouraged all parents to feel welcomed and comfortable in the school. A family learning day on the theme of Easter has helped parents to understand the school's Christian ethos and the importance of Christian teaching within the school. Consequently families are aware of and support the way that the school introduces pupils to Christian teachings and values. They appreciate that these are central to the way that the school supports pupil attendance and the strategies that are in place to avoid exclusions. The RE curriculum ensures that pupils encounter a range of faiths and have a growing understanding of how their Christian values are shared with people from different religious backgrounds. RE lessons are well planned and stimulate much excitement and discussion. Pupils are, therefore, able to talk confidently about their own faith and share their ideas and thoughts openly with others. This has created what one parent described as a 'rainbow school in which everyone cares'. Pupils are beginning to gain an age-appropriate understanding of Christianity as a world faith.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.**

Carefully structured and planned collective worship expands pupils' understanding of Christian values by linking Bible stories to their everyday experiences and challenges. Through collective worship and RE pupils demonstrate an increasingly sophisticated knowledge and understanding of Jesus. They are confident in expressing ideas about Jesus and God and older pupils are beginning to explore more abstract ideas about Jesus being everywhere and what that means to them personally. Teachers have a sound understanding of spiritual development and encourage discussion about faith and worship which has enabled pupils to develop a sense of both amazement and innate acceptance that the God who is responsible for creation cares about them as individuals. Pupils benefit from an airy and stimulating environment which provides space and opportunity for personal and collective prayer both inside and outside the building. The school has a strong emphasis on prayer in collective worship and in the classroom which has resulted in pupils feeling confident to write their own prayers for the prayer tree. These are used as intercessory prayers by the local incumbent when she leads worship. Collective worship has a clear liturgical shape which enables all pupils to engage at a level appropriate to

their diverse backgrounds and levels of development. As a result all pupils have a sense of inclusion and are gaining a deepening understanding of the elements of Christian worship. In addition, their participation in the 'distinctiveness' group has led to pupils being confident and articulate in talking about worship and what it means to them. More opportunities for them to participate in planning and leading worship would increase the already strong pupil engagement in collective worship. The school places a strong emphasis on the liturgical year which is enhanced through visits to church to celebrate major festivals. These services are well attended by parents and have provided an effective bridge to attract families to 'Messy Church'. School and church work closely together to ensure that families are supported spiritually and practically in times of need and both organisation work together to ensure that all children, particularly the most vulnerable, have access to everything they need to benefit from the opportunities that the school offers. A sound focus on stories and teachings from the Bible helps children to make positive choices and they are keen not only to retell them but also to explain what they mean and how they link to the schools core and additional values. Thus they are able to talk about God's love and care as exemplified in the parable of the lost sheep and the perseverance of the good shepherd. This provides pupils with a very strong sense of the person of Jesus whom they recognise as directly demonstrating the values that they share. Parents are encouraged to discuss values and choices through the use of newsletters and links on the school website. Their engagement has reinforced a shared understanding and appreciation of the ethos of the school which has enhanced communication and mutual understanding between school and families.

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

School leaders have an extremely clear and well considered understanding of what makes the school a distinctively Christian school. The vice principal has benefitted from mentoring by an outstanding school in the diocese. This has enabled her to have a very clear focus on the factors which contribute to the schools distinctiveness which she shares with governors and staff. A strong and devolved leadership has ensured that all members of staff know and understand the significance of the core Christian values and ethos. These are made explicit in staff induction and all members of the school community clearly articulate them, and what they mean to the life of the school, and the individuals within it. Robust systems of monitoring and evaluating all aspects of distinctiveness are in place and are effectively used to inform future actions. Pupil voice is considered to be very important in the school and pupils participate in the 'distinctiveness' group which meets on a termly basis to evaluate the school's distinctiveness as a Church school. This group feeds back to the federation governing body meeting and ensures that all phases within the federation have an understanding and appreciation of the Christian values and ethos which are central to the life of the infant and nursery school. This, and shared opportunities for professional development, have enabled the schools distinctive Christian ethos to permeate throughout the federation with a deepening understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which has had a positive impact on attitudes and behaviour. The incumbent has a very important role in the strategic development and evaluation of the school's distinctiveness as a church school. She has worked closely with the school to ensure that the expression of Christian values has a theological foundation. Staff have also benefitted from a wide range of high quality training from the Diocese and other agencies. This has led to the development of a sense of aspiration amongst staff who are able to utilise their leadership skills within the federation and other Church schools. RE and collective worship both have a high profile within the school and both are managed very effectively by experienced staff who work in close collaboration. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensure that both combine to be effective in ensuring schools distinctive character and to pupils SMSC development.

SIAMS report, July 2016, Netherhall St James CE VC Infant and Nursery School, HD5 9NT