



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

### **Austwick Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Austwick  
Via Lancaster  
LA2 8BN

#### **Diocese: Ripon and Leeds**

Local authority: North Yorkshire  
Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2013  
Date of last inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007  
School's unique reference number: 138916  
Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Woods  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Lynne Gillions 662

#### **School context**

Austwick Church of England Primary School serves the village and surrounding wide, rural area. There are 48 pupils on roll and 11 in the nursery. It is part of a Confederation of 3 Primary Schools with an Executive Headteacher who started in September 2012. Following changes to the system of education, this is the first year that the school has had a Year 6. Pupils are all of white British heritage.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Austwick Church of England school are good**

Austwick Primary School has a strong Christian ethos which underpins the life of the school. With the excellent support of the church, the commitment of the staff and the well-integrated curriculum, the children are given a firm grounding in Christian values. Pupils are seen as individuals with differing needs and are the central focus of the school family. They are cared for well and enjoy school.

#### **Established strengths**

- The deeply embedded Christian values which are evident across the whole School community
- The excellent mutual support and the warmth of relationships coming from the Church
- The children seen as individuals with individual needs
- The respect shown for children's achievements in the presentation and displaying of their work

#### **Focus for development**

- Establish a more rigorous, systematic and regular system of monitoring and evaluating the school's performance as a church school, ensuring the involvement of governors and the new Confederation Co-ordinator, which feeds into the school improvement cycle.
- Enhance the pupils' awareness of national and global issues by forming links with other schools in contrasting circumstances
- Further develop the children's participation in planning, delivering and evaluating collective worship to build on some of the current good practice.

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

Christian values are embedded into the life of this school. They are overtly evidenced in the displays, in the programme for collective worship and in the quality of religious education but they are also reflected in the views and opinions expressed by the children and in the respect shown for each other and in their relationships with adults. These values provide the foundations for good learning and high attainment. Pupils' progress and attainment is being tracked to ensure consistency is developed across all year groups and individuals are appropriately challenged to reach their full potential. All members of the community appreciate the significant contribution that Christian values make to the daily experience and achievement of the children. Parents' comments included 'the whole child is celebrated whatever their aptitude or ability', 'teachers know the children's different personalities' and 'children are at the centre'. All children are given opportunities to take on responsibilities as monitors or buddies and the School Council has been active in fund raising for the local community and for national charities. A parental concern was expressed about behaviour but the children all said that they got on well together, problems were very rare and they were always sorted out. Indeed, behaviour was observed to be excellent with children being polite and friendly towards each other both in and out of lessons and showing respect for each other's opinions. Several comments testified to how well the older children looked after the younger ones. Children are given a range of opportunities to develop their spirituality through discussion, prayer, reflection, creative activities and experiencing the world around them. These are provided across the whole curriculum, through collective worship, through visits, visitors and through the popular ACES club organised weekly by the church. As a result, children are well able to express themselves, 'we need to forgive each other so we can work together and achieve things'. Governors, Headteacher, staff, parents and pupils all work within this strong Christian ethos and all value the impact that this has across the whole life of the School. Children are taught about other faiths and have visited different places of worship. The School has plans to establish closer links with schools in contrasting areas to enhance the children's experience of national and global communities.

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

Collective worship plays a central part in school life. Children talked about how they enjoyed it and what it meant to them personally. They were able to give examples of how the Christian values that had been part of the collective worship programme had influenced their daily lives. 'I thought about perseverance when I did my SATs.' Other children spoke of how they thought about what they had learned about perseverance when they were involved in sport or about the importance of hope to them when someone in the family was ill. Children have some understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In an observed act of collective worship led by the Padre, the focus was on the receiving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Children listened well and enjoyed watching children demonstrate their strength by holding weights. This was used to illustrate strength and power and was linked to the transformation of the disciples at Pentecost and to the experience of a parishioner in coping with illness. During the worship children sang well and joined in the Lord's Prayer. The warmth of the relationship between the Padre and the children was evident. In other daily acts of worship children pass round a cross at the beginning and greet each other and they use a candle to focus on periods of reflection. There is a Prayer Box in which children may leave their own written prayers to be shared during worship. The main Christian festivals are celebrated with services in school and church and to which parents and the local community are invited. These included an Ash Wednesday Holy Communion held in the School and an Epiphany parade of the three kings around the village. These links with the local church and community are a very positive influence on the life of the school. There are occasional visitors from other Christian traditions including the Catholic Priest and Sportsreach. Planning for collective worship is led by the co-ordinator and developed by the different worship leaders. It is focussed around Christian values and Bible stories. Some children are involved in the Worship Group which helps plan special services but there is scope for the children to be more involved in planning, delivering and evaluating the regular acts of worship in School.

Similarly, the School would benefit from more systematic and regular monitoring of collective worship by the governors.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Standards in religious education are mainly in line or above national expectations and children make good progress through school. Children describe religious education as 'fun', 'interesting', 'exciting'. When one child said it was 'democratic' all the children concurred with her view that 'you don't all have to believe the same thing, you are respected whatever your views'. Teaching is good with some elements of outstanding. In a Key Stage 1 lesson children talked about the story of The Prodigal Son and they recognised that forgiveness, greed and jealousy were all components of the story. They were then asked to reflect how they should behave by giving examples of when they had demonstrated Christian values or by looking at how they might respond to different problematic situations and compare it to how Jesus might have responded. Children were able to relate the Christian values to situations that they had experienced in school such as when they had helped somebody or when they had used money wisely. This lesson was linked well to collective worship themes and to Bible stories. In a Key Stage 2 lesson the pupils were asked to order Christian values and justify why they thought some were more important than others. This engendered some thoughtful comments, 'justice is important for everyone because everyone wants things to be fair', 'you need humility when you are really struggling so that you can ask someone for help' and 'creativity means finding better ways of doing things to make things better for everyone'. They recognised that different values may change in importance as they got older 'because you learn by your experiences' and that these values made an impact on their everyday lives. Religious education is given high status in School and this is reflected in the children's beautifully presented books and the quality of marking leading to further progress. Assessment procedures are in place and they are supported by a portfolio of levelled work. Children are increasingly contributing to the assessment process and once this is established in school it should lead to outstanding practice. The School now needs to explore how the new Confederation Co-ordinator can best monitor progress and attainment and offer targeted support and advice to further enhance the good practice that is already in place.

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

Leaders and managers of the school are committed to 'educating each child to his or her full potential within a loving and caring Christian environment' as stated in the School's mission statement. They are successful in ensuring that Christian values underpin the curriculum and the overall life of the school. Governors regularly visit and help in school. They have a good and improving understanding of the school's academic performance helped by termly tracking. However, there is an over reliance on informal methods of monitoring the school's performance as a church school and this needs to be regular, systematic and lead into the school improvement cycle to ensure it fully impacts on the pupils. Governors have received some training to help equip them for their roles. Co-ordinators of collective worship and religious education show a strong commitment to their areas and some excellent practice is in evidence. There now needs to be a clarification of roles within the Confederation so that everyone's contributions are valued, best use is made of expertise and a clear picture of strengths and areas for development is established. Everyone speaks of the strong links with the church and how they positively contribute to making school a special place, influencing behaviour and relationships. The school has also benefitted from Diocesan links. Most parents are pleased with the school saying 'it is like a family', 'teachers are approachable', 'it's a caring school' and 'if the children are in a happy environment they will thrive'. The school, as well as being part of the Confederation, is also involved with the local Cluster of Schools which offers a range of sporting activities. Links with Settle College have seen pupils singing in a musical and some of its students running an Energy Club at the school.

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