



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

### St Barnabas Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Green Lane, Worcester. WR3 8NZ

**Previous inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Worcester**

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 09 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 13 September 2010

School's unique reference number: 116858

Headteacher: Sarah Hanson

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

#### School context

St Barnabas is a large and over-subscribed city primary school which serves an area of fairly high deprivation. There are 420 children on roll. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage with a small minority of children from other ethnic origins. The number of pupils entitled to Pupil Premium is high. The parish church of St. Barnabas is a short walk away.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Barnabas VC Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The ability of all stakeholders to articulate and promote a vision for the school rooted in Christian values ensures that every child feels secure and loved.
- The great value placed on worship is linked to Christian values and impacts positively on the life of pupils and staff.
- The motivated headteacher has a clear vision and strategy for moving the school forward as a church school.
- The children are fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith and have respect for the diversity and difference within the church and other communities.

#### 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.
- Formalise the evaluation of collective worship, so that all stakeholders are fully involved in the process of identifying where improvement is needed to inform future planning.

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

Christian values permeate the whole life of the school and create an ethos that enables children to flourish in their potential as unique individuals. All children are valued with additional support given to ensure positive outcomes for all. Vulnerable children are particularly nurtured carefully with initiatives that clearly demonstrate the Christian values of care and compassion. The behaviour of the children is of the highest standard and relationships are consistently attributed to the Christian nature of the school. Children's behaviour away from school is exemplary and this comes from the Christian values which form such a significant part of the school day. The development point from the previous inspection of involving children and parents in the evaluation of the school as a church school has led to the creation and implementation of a new mission statement. The new statement of 'Inspire, Nurture and Achieve' is now clearly understood and its links to the Christian distinctiveness of the school is articulated by all members of the school community. The children readily acknowledge the impact of the school's Christian values within their daily lives and confidently explain the links between the values and Christian teaching. For example, a child explained the need for perseverance at a cross country event likening it to 'St Barnabas the encourager.' The school provides experiences that enable children to develop a limited understanding of spirituality but more are needed to allow children to continue to deepen this interpretation of spirituality and this is identified as an area for development. The relationship between the local community, parish church and school is strong and is characterised by mutual respect and a genuine sense of community. The school has links with two primary schools in Africa resulting in children appreciating and respecting global diversity. In all these ways, the Christian character of the school has an impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children. Parents comment that they are welcomed into school and consider themselves to be an intrinsic part of the school community. Christian values and Bible stories are regularly discussed at home and this can be directly attributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The religious education (RE) subject leader ensures standards are high and lessons challenging. Children enjoy their RE lessons and are able to question and develop their understanding of the impact religion has on others. They are clearly aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith and are developing a deep understanding of the diversity and difference within and between other faith communities. Children are excited to share their personal knowledge and an example given was of a Year Two Muslim child showing his Qu'ran to his class and talking confidently about it. The subject leader attends diocesan training ensuring that new initiatives are disseminated to staff and was instrumental in the full implementation of the new Worcestershire agreed syllabus into school.

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

Collective worship at St Barnabas is central to the life of the school and is a springboard for learning about Christian values and biblical teaching. Children speak with confidence about the way in which worship shapes their thinking and actions. Planning is very detailed and refers to Christian values, major religious festivals from world faiths, the seasons of the church's year and relevant world issues. Symbolic artefacts are displayed on a worship table and children are able to articulate what they mean to Christians. A range of worship leaders offer children a rich and diverse experience of worship. For example, worship led by an Anglican priest and Muslim headteacher, both from Tanzania, allowed children to experience a different cultural perspective of worship. 'Open the Book' assemblies, led by members of the parish church, are well received and the children enjoy participating. A 'Reflective Journal' is used following these assemblies which provide an insight into how 'Open the Book' worship has a direct impact on the life of the children. Informal feedback by children and staff occurs but the lack of formal systems of evaluation mean that improvement is limited. Reflective areas in all classrooms enable worship to extend far 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 to talk to God and ask for his help. Children have a clear understanding of

prayer. The 'Lord's Prayer', learning about Jesus Christ and developing an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit together enable children to make a link between the Bible and lessons for their own lives. A Eucharist workshop held annually in school for Key Stage Two children is then followed by experiencing a Eucharist service at St Barnabas church. Children are able to talk about the importance this plays in the life of the Anglican church and liken it to sharing food with friends just as Jesus did with his friends at the Last Supper. The parish church is used to celebrate major Christian festivals, which are supported well by parents and governors, thereby enhancing the school's distinctive Christian character. The parish priest encourages visits to the parish church and is instrumental in introducing the children to Anglican symbols, images and key features of the church. Visits to another local Anglican church and Baptist church offer children a greater experience of Christian worship.

**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. The understanding of all adults of how Christian values and spiritual development make a difference ensures that these are at the heart of the school's vision and school improvement. The school has recently appointed two new foundation governors who already understand their role as strategic leaders of a church school and are enthusiastic and ready to accept the challenges governance brings. The Christian values shared by all leaders and staff contribute well to pupil behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents know that their concerns are dealt with efficiently and sensitively and link this to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The development of all staff and governors is achieved through individual support, attendance at diocesan training and the mentoring and support of each other which leads to a positive impact on the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The parish priest, also a foundation governor, has an effective pastoral role within the school which is valued by staff, governors and children thereby strengthening the links between the school and church communities. Mutual respect and support between the parish church and school enable both to flourish and fulfil their mission to the school, the local community and beyond. For example, the donating and delivering of Harvest baskets to the elderly members of the community links well with the spiritual, moral and social development of the children. 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 an excellent example of a school which is both distinctive and highly effective.

SIAMS report November 2015 St Barnabas VC Primary School WR3 8NZ