



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The Methodist Church 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Coniston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Shepherds Bridge Lane, Coniston, Cumbria LA21 8AL

Previous inspection grade: Satisfactory
Current inspection grade: Good
Diocese: Carlisle
 Local authority: Cumbria
 Date of inspection: 2 July 2015
 Date of last inspection: 14 October 2011
 School's unique reference number: 112279
 Headteacher: Rachel Hindle
 Inspector's name and number: Ruth Wall NS 548



Diocese of Carlisle
Growing Disciples

School context

This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school with 59 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils supported through pupil premium is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than average. A significant number of new governors have been appointed since the previous inspection. The substantive headteacher has been on maternity leave for six months and her absence covered by a headteacher from a local CE primary school. The headteacher returned from maternity leave shortly before the inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Coniston as a Church of England school are good

- The clear Christian vision of leaders and governors and the way in which this is communicated to all members of the school community.
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good and is rooted in the school's Christian ethos.
- Links with the parish church, other local churches and Christian groups are strong. As a result, children have a clear sense of belonging to the wider Christian community.

Areas to improve

- Develop the approach to self-evaluation and monitoring of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school in order to embed a structured approach.
- Develop a deeper understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith to extend children's appreciation and understanding of different expressions of Christianity globally.
- Promote greater involvement by pupils in the planning and leading of some aspects of collective worship in order to develop their confidence and skills in leadership.

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

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection on ensuring that distinctively Christian values are made explicit. Christian symbols and colourful displays around the school celebrate the school's Christian character. Children say the values of love and respect are special and link these to how Jesus treated people. Trust and openness are key aspects of the excellent relationships throughout the school community. Parents speak of the welcome they and their children always receive and the willingness of staff to give time to talk to both children and parents. Children's efforts and achievements are acknowledged and celebrated. In consequence, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent; therefore, most children are making good levels of academic attainment and progress. The school is diligent in putting in place intervention strategies which are effective in meeting the individual needs of the children. The broad and rich curriculum contributes to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are encouraged to show concern for others as part of the school's Christian service. A reflection area, with a table of children's special finds, is testament to their appreciation of the awe and wonder of God's creation. Holding up a bird's nest a child said, 'It's amazing that a bird can make something so special when they only have a beak'. Diocesan training, relating to ways to develop reflection, reflective spaces and promoting spirituality in schools, has resulted in a detailed plan for an outdoor space for prayer and reflection. The Experience Easter event, with a variety of age-appropriate activities relating to the Easter story, is one very good example of how RE supports the Christian character of the school. Children also see the value of learning about other faiths and this has positive impact on their attitudes to diverse religions and cultures. This was noted during a visit to the Manjushri Buddhist temple. Children are made aware that Christianity is a global world faith, however, leaders recognise that this is an area that needs further development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important focus to every school day, bringing the school community together. A pupil survey shows that children now have positive views of worship and say it helps them to 'learn how to get on together'. Planning includes exploring Christian values, the Bible and major Christian festivals. The headteacher explains that there is always a focus on relating Christian teaching to 'living in today's 21st century world with all its complexities and challenges'. Themes introduced in worship are followed up in other areas of the curriculum. Staff say that children often remind each other of how to observe a Christian value they have been learning about. A prayer tree, with children's own prayers, shows that they understand the value of personal prayer. The school's monitoring of this aspect of worship notes that children's prayers have developed to include praying for others. Children have a good knowledge of the life and person of Jesus and a developing understanding of the nature of God. In the worship observed, children were helped to reflect on the relevance of the Holy Spirit for the journey through life. They are beginning to ask challenging questions and develop their ideas. Parents say that their children talk about Bible stories at home and explain what they have been learning about. Children's spiritual development is supported very well through worship and activities led by the vicar and other Christian leaders and groups including Jesters for Jesus and the Rhema Theatre. Demonstrating how the school has moved on since the previous inspection, children are now involved in evaluating worship. This has led to significant school improvement with children organising the hall for worship, selecting appropriate songs and being actively involved in aspects of worship. Leaders recognise the need for children to develop their skills in planning and leading worship independently.

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

The headteacher has a clear Christian vision which she lives out in action. She inspires and leads school development which is recognised by all members of the school community. A major focus for development involved the whole school community in re-establishing their

Christian vision and values. This is now understood and embedded in both policy and practice. Governors are pro-active in their leadership role and use their various skills to good effect. Church school development issues are included in the action plan, regularly reviewed by all governors and used to celebrate achievements made. Areas for further development have been accurately identified. On-going monitoring and evaluation is often done in an informal way rather than by using structured procedures. Areas to improve, identified in the previous inspection, have been addressed resulting in significant developments in the Christian character of the school. A governor summed up the views of teachers, governors and parents, that during the temporary change in leadership, 'the well established sense of order has flowed seamlessly on'. Working links with the partner school have been strengthened to the benefit of both schools. Excellent teamwork, diocesan support and in-service training enhance the Christian distinctiveness of the school very well. The school is at the heart of the local community. They enjoy strong links with a range of community groups, such as Age UK. The Golden Oldies lunch is enjoyed both by those attending and the children who, through their active involvement, are developing relationships with their guests. Links with St Andrew's Church are very good and there is a commitment and involvement in all the different Christian denominations within Coniston. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. RE and collective worship are well led, with planning and evaluation making a good contribution future development.

SIAMS report, July 2015, Coniston CofE Primary School, Coniston LA21 8AL