



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Hawkesley Church Primary Academy

Shannon Road
Hawkesley
Birmingham
B38 9TR

Previous SIAS grade: Satisfactory (VA/Methodist)

Current inspection grade: Good (AC)

Diocese: Birmingham

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 24 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 31 March 2010

School's unique reference number: 139269

Headteacher: Derek Higgins Supporting clergy: Reverends Jane Platt (Hon. Assistant Priest, Anglican) and Caz Hague (Methodist)

Inspector's name and number: Allyson Taylor 768

School context

Hawkesley Church Primary Academy converted to an academy within the Diocese of Birmingham Education Trust in June 2013. The school has 237 pupils on roll, including those in its nursery class. Ofsted judges the school to require improvement. The school serves an area of significant deprivation. Nearly 90% of children are eligible for free school meals; the number with special needs or a disability is well above the national average. The majority of learners are of white British background. The headteacher has been in post since 2014. The school has a joint Anglican and Methodist foundation and the school hall is also the local church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hawkesley as a Church of England/Methodist school are good

- The Christian character is deeply embedded; Christian values are the mortar in the joint denominational foundation of this school.
- Passionate leadership of the headteacher, supported by all staff and governors, leads to the outstanding way learners' individual needs are met.
- A dynamic Christian vision means this is a school living out its values so every day is filled with joy and mutual respect for individual achievement.
- Partnerships with families are now strong and demonstrate the Christian values in action.

Areas to improve

- Establish formal systems for all leaders, particularly governors, to monitor the Christian character, religious education (RE) and collective worship so that the academy improvement plan drives development in the Church school ethos.
- Review the leadership of RE so that the coordinator may better evaluate provision and assessment and standards more readily compared with those in other subjects.
- Extend opportunities for learners to plan and lead acts of worship so that all ages contribute to the worship life of the school.

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

Hawkesley is 'a haven, a safe place, like coming home.' One child, who was not welcomed at another school, said he felt 'warm inside' due to the exceptional care for his needs. The school is a special place where the six Christian values of respect, responsibility, hope, friendship, truth and perseverance have a profound impact. Improving academic progress is underpinned by the values which mean learners are safe, secure and so are ready to learn. Many face challenges in their learning but say that staff and their friends help them persevere when work is hard. 'Helping others helps us to learn too,' said one child. Another said 'being hopeful builds our dreams for the future.' It is clear that the widespread application of the values is raising aspirations. The headteacher says the school is committed to 'getting to great.' He is well-supported by deeply committed staff, notably his senior leaders and the pastoral manager. National data confirms the upward trend in standards, notably in early years' development and in key stage 1 maths. The school's current internal data shows rapid progress against targets set this year. These are likely to narrow the gap between Hawkesley's test results and national averages. Attendance has also improved and this proves the school's commitment to safeguarding and nurturing each child as unique and precious to God. Concerns about attendance are honestly but sensitively communicated to parents who appreciate that the school helps them to help their child. For example, earlier starts to the day and subsidised breakfast club have improved punctuality. The core values are widely understood as Christian in origin but universal in application. They are understood as values for life beyond school. Parents talk about the impact of 'values not rules.' The headteacher has changed mindsets by changing the old school rules for values which secure responsible behaviour. Some parents find the values support relationships at home. The Christian character of the school also underpins curriculum plans. Learning experiences successfully foster understanding of and respect for our multi-cultural society. RE enhances this and learners know about several world faiths. The subject develops reflection and links the values with topics studied, for example how the Easter story demonstrates the school's values. One pupil said: 'Jesus was hopeful, even on the cross he hoped to see God.' The school is aware that a clearer definition of spirituality would support provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Above all, the strong Christian character transforms relationships across the ages. Positive behaviour, firm and fair sanctions and a genuine understanding of learners' needs means this school is a shining example of Christian discipleship in action.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship reflects the religious foundations of the school and shapes how its values are understood within a Christian context. Acts of worship enhance the day to day lives of the whole school community. The time to come together, to share stories, to sing, to reflect and to share thoughts and prayers is valued by all ages. Worship is generally based on the Bible and teaching of Jesus, particularly through the worship led by local clergy. As the school hall is also the church, children have the rare experience of school being church and vice versa. They have a good knowledge of a range of Anglican and Methodist traditions. The Lord's Prayer, the Grace, the Peace and different blessings feature regularly in worship. Themes are explored which relate to other curriculum areas and which are relevant to learners' own lives. As a result, learners are keen to support charities, like Macmillan, and to take action in the service of others. A small group of learners (CREW) lead aspects of worship. Others express a wish to extend this so that all ages may plan and lead worship. Learners are also keen to widen their range of worship songs and would like the chance to use the spiritual garden, once complete, for outdoor worship. Prayer and time for reflection are integral to worship and feature at lunch and the end of the school day. Children use the prayer spaces in each class to reflect and to display special books and artefacts. Many learners find spiritual nourishment from worship and prayer. The school prayer is based on the six values and is the product of wide consultation with children and adults. Governors attend worship but more formal systems for monitoring and evaluation of provision are not yet in place.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

RE is based on the locally agreed syllabus. Learners have a secure knowledge of Christianity and talk with confidence of a range of Bible stories, often relating these to the school's Christian values. As such, RE enhances the Christian character of the school. The subject is well-resourced with a range of teaching materials which enrich learning. Children's books and curriculum plans show that learners have a more superficial knowledge of faiths other than Christianity. Lessons explore festivals and how belonging to a religion shapes the lives of its followers. RE, therefore, makes a valuable contribution to SMSC development and supports learners' understanding of global diversity. There is a repetition of themes, like Christmas and Easter, but not at a deeper level as children move up school. RE is a popular subject and learners are engaged by the practical and cross-curricular way it is taught. The standard of work, however, varies across years. The RE coordinator is currently the headteacher and this role had been undertaken by a number of other staff since the last inspection. Consequently, monitoring the effectiveness of the subject has been sporadic. The headteacher is aware that systems for assessment, monitoring of progress and moderation of standards are not fully in place. Actions to address this are underway. Limited tracking and monitoring of RE prevents staff from knowing if standards are in line with other subjects. Governors know that the leadership of this key subject must be devolved to ensure the quality of teaching and learning is fully understood and areas for development integrated into wider school improvement plans.

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

The exemplary leadership of the headteacher is grounded in Christian mission. His passion and tireless devotion have led this school into a much better place as a church school. As a local resident and former teacher at Hawkesley, his understanding of the needs of the local community is central to the success of the school. His impact is widely felt and greatly appreciated by children, staff, governors and parents. Good relationships are now the hallmark of this school; there is an infectious sense of joy. Partnerships with parents, local Anglican and Methodist churches and the community are of considerable mutual benefit. Parents are warmly welcomed into school. Some, whose own experience of school has made them reluctant visitors, regularly attend special events including worship. They say the school 'is on the up.' The diocese is committed to the future success of the school and has appointed governors to secure such success. Governors aim to build on community links and so extend their mission of working with families. The headteacher sits on a diocesan steering group which plans for effective ways to retain and recruit staff in church schools. This demonstrates leaders' commitment to the future leadership of church schools. The academy trust provides professional development, including reviews of teaching and governance. Leaders, therefore, feel supported as they focus on improving standards. The shared vision for the school, 'Believe, Achieve, Succeed,' is lived out through the six Christian values. All leaders can explain the impact these have had on behaviour and engagement with learning. Staff and senior leaders ensure that displays and artefacts celebrate the Christian status of the school. Staff and governors work in a harmonious team and they delight in their common purpose. While their shared vision is underpinned by values, it is not explicit in all policies and documents. For example, the academy improvement plan makes only brief reference to developing the Christian character of the school. This reflects leaders' recent focus on standards expected by Ofsted and the DfE. Governors know the school very well and are familiar with progress data. They are less involved in self-evaluation as a church school. At this time, with progress data more favourable, governors aim to refocus on evaluating the church school ethos. This means that the grade for leadership is good rather than outstanding. As governors plan to review the school's mission statement, this shows they are aware of their next steps as a church school, even if these are not formally noted in improvement plans. Leaders understand that monitoring, sustaining and enhancing the Christian character, RE and worship requires more attention if Hawkesley is to be not just a great school but an outstanding church school.

