



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School

Emerson Road
Ribbleton
PR1 5SN

Methodist District: Preston Ribble

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 18 September 2014

Date of last inspection: 29 January 2010

School's unique reference number: 119354

Headteacher: Jill Alexander-Steele

Inspector's name and number: John Horwood NS177

School context

The school is an average size junior school with 203 pupils on roll. Around two-thirds of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The proportion of disadvantaged children is above average. The school does not benefit from a nearby Methodist church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School as a Methodist school are good

- The headteacher, supported by a dedicated governing body, leads by example. Her strong faith and her determination that every child should succeed ensure equal opportunities and the absence of any discrimination within this continually improving school.
- The promotion of Christian values by all staff has an excellent impact on pupils and they develop into mature, sensible and caring individuals whose behaviour is outstanding.
- Pupils' excellent responses to Christian values impact on their attitudes to learning, the progress they make and the relationships and mutual respect within the school.
- School leaders, the Minister and the Methodist schools' worker have worked to improve pupils' understanding of Methodist traditions, the work of John Wesley and the Trinity. Where the actions have been introduced there has been a lasting impact on pupils. Plans are in place to extend these actions across the whole school.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the learning about the life and teaching of John Wesley and the way in which this influences the lives of people today takes place throughout the school.
- Extend the age appropriate learning about the Trinity to all year groups so that their understanding develops as they move through the school.

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

The school, motivated by a Christian concern for all pupils and their families, is responding appropriately to the makeup of the community served by the school. There is a strong focus on Christian values and in this multi-faith community these are linked to the values of other faiths. These values are recognised throughout the day by staff, pupils and parents. They are supported by displays around the school and by the curriculum. Their impact is seen, for example, in the outstanding behaviour of pupils. The Christian character of the school is also reflected in the caring and friendly ethos within the school. The Christian character of the school and its association with the Methodist community are visible within its name and all forms of communication with parents. It is also reflected in the pride pupils have in the school. The outstanding care provided by the school is demonstrated by the headteacher, or another member of staff, being present on the playground in the mornings to welcome pupils. This also develops trust and respect between the school and families. Pupils' achievement is celebrated in displays and at the weekly celebration assembly. Christian fellowship is demonstrated by the school and parents working together to encourage attendance which is steadily rising. The school employs a strong pastoral team to support the Christian value of justice. This includes three full-time mentors, a counsellor and a specialist teacher who are supported by the Methodist Minister. Every pupil is valued as an individual ensuring that pupils of all abilities are able to make similar progress in lessons. This is evident in the elimination of gaps between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates. Pupils say they learn well because teachers respect them and make lessons fun. This is shown by the improving standards and at least good progress being made by all pupils in core subjects and in Religious Education (RE). All adults set good examples to pupils and this promotes mutual respect. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding for their age and pupils of all faiths and backgrounds get on very well together. Pupils learn and understand about Christianity being a multi-cultural world faith and about the links to their own faith. An increasing number of classes know about the life and teaching of John Wesley and how his work influences people's lives. Their experiences of observing Methodist traditions and practices are limited because the school no longer has a Methodist place of worship nearby. The Methodist Minister from Preston Central Church and the Methodist schools' worker are having an excellent impact on pupils' understanding of the Trinity but this is not yet embedded across the school. Pupils' thankfulness is demonstrated by their outstanding love of singing. Pupils talk confidently about RE lessons and how they promote Christian values. Lessons provide strong support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by linking Christian values to lifestyles and, for example, successfully promote high quality behaviour and relationships.

The impact of collective worship on the school community good

Collective worship is seen as an important part of the day and pupils are able to talk confidently about how their experiences have helped them understand others. The school's collective worship policy is well embedded into school routines. Worship takes place daily on either a whole school basis or within the classroom. Whole school worship is generally led by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher or the Minister. All staff attend the whole school assembly as far as possible to share Christian fellowship and teachers lead their class assembly. Special worship is held for Christian festivals and important times of the year for other faiths represented in the school. This reflects the school's focus on supporting the faiths of all pupils. Collective worship is coordinated by the headteacher in liaison with the Minister. Planning has improved significantly since the previous inspection although work is still in progress on finalising a long-term plan. Pupils and adults join in collective worship with enthusiasm. Themes, such as the current theme of Christian values, are dealt with exceptionally well for this multi-faith community. The values are linked together using a practical activity, in which pupils are very involved, showing how Christian values are supported by everything in the school. Singing is of high quality and pupils eagerly join in. Their behaviour and their attitudes to worship are outstanding. The impact of the worship is demonstrated by the way pupils adopt Christian

values and the way they join in with prayer. Pupils say they enjoy worship which they know is a feature of being in a church school. Every classroom has a space dedicated for individual prayer and pupils value this and respect the areas. The Methodist schools' worker holds workshops about collective worship and Methodist traditions which provide excellent support to pupils' understanding of the Trinity and the life and work of John Wesley. However this work has had insufficient time to have had a consistent impact across the whole school. The impact of collective worship on pupils and staff is monitored and evaluated regularly by the senior management team. Foundation governors attend worship on a regular basis. These discussions and observations are used to inform future planning resulting, for example, in increased involvement of pupils in the monitoring of worship.

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

School leaders, including the governing body, have an outstanding impact on the effectiveness of the school as a Methodist church school. They have shown excellent Christian concern and been sensitive to the context of the school and the needs of the families. They have built secure foundations to ensure that pupils gain an understanding of the Trinity and of the life and work of John Wesley. Where actions have been implemented the impact has been excellent and pupils talk confidently about their understanding. There has been insufficient time to extend the actions across the school. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's aims and core purpose and with the leadership team lead by example in promoting the school as a church school. They ensure that Christian values permeate throughout the school activities and support the development of every pupil to his or her full ability. This has led to improved, and now high, performance in all aspects of pupils' academic and personal skills. The leaders' self-evaluation of the school as a church school is accurate and is fully supported by the inspection evidence. This demonstrates that leaders have a secure and accurate understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness. They can clearly demonstrate that, whilst focusing on the whole child and the needs of the community, they have raised standards. Leaders, staff and governors work as a team to ensure that this will become an outstanding church school. The partnerships with the foundation governors, the Methodist Minister and the Methodist schools' worker are excellent. They work together for the benefit of pupils and their families. The school has a strong commitment to Christian stewardship, supporting a range of charities local, national and international. This helps pupils develop their understanding of the needs of others in a wider cultural context. Foundation governors are dedicated and actively involved with the school and help pupils understand about wisdom and service. The partnership with the Methodist circuit is strong and has enabled strong links to be developed with the Preston Central Church and the support of the Methodist Schools' worker to be provided. This is having a significant impact on pupils' understanding of Methodist traditions. To develop future potential leaders of church schools there is a strong focus on professional development of all staff. This was successful for the previous deputy who was recently promoted but the opportunity arose in a non-faith school. Leaders recognise the important contribution that RE makes within the school and it is coordinated by the headteacher. Parents' support is demonstrated by their positive responses to the school surveys. There is good attendance at achievement assemblies and at special services held in the school.

SIAMS report September 2014 Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School, Ribbleton, PR1 5SN