



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Kirkby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hall Lane  
Kirkby  
Merseyside  
L32 1TZ

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Liverpool**

Local authority: Knowsley

Date of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016

Date of last inspection: October 2010

School's unique reference number: 104448

Headteacher: Mair Hindmarsh

Inspector's name and number: Stephen Burrow 622

#### School context

Kirkby CofE is a larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British Heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well above the national average. Attendance is good and improving. The school is currently a voluntary controlled school, with planned change to voluntary aided status in summer 2016.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirkby CE, as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The excellent relationships within the family of the school and the outstanding behaviour and attitudes of pupils are firmly based on their understanding of Christian values.
- Each child is highly valued and nurtured as an individual in a caring Christian environment enabling them to grow academically, spiritually and socially.
- The outstanding, purposeful Christian leadership of the headteacher, supported by governors and staff, deeply embeds the distinctive Christian ethos.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) contribute significantly in promoting the distinctive Christian values and developing pupils' spirituality.

### **Areas to improve**

- Extend the pupils' involvement in collective worship, giving them appropriate independence in planning, presentation and evaluation, thereby enhancing their leadership skills.

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

Christian values are explicitly expressed and the deeply embedded Christian distinctiveness is clearly understood by all members of the school family. Relationships are rooted in the teachings of Jesus. Pupils are encouraged to ask, 'What would Jesus do or say?' As a result, there is an outstanding, mutually nurturing culture throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to ask, 'How would I feel if it happened to me?' This reinforces the Christian values of respect, love and forgiveness. One pupil commented, 'Everything I've done in the past is forgotten about and we move on.' The Chair of Governors said that pupils behave well, not because they are made to but because their excellent behaviour is part of the school ethos. Pupils know how to make the right choices and staff model this. As a result pupils feel safe, happy, valued and cared for. They want to be in school because they enjoy their learning and this is reflected in their good levels of attendance. An extremely supportive approach is shown towards all families, which is based upon a clear understanding of each pupil's unique needs. This is supported by the work of the very effective school's learning mentor. The self esteem nurtured in this loving Christian school enables the pupils to give of their best and make contributions, without fear of failure. Consequently pupils make at least the progress expected of them with some achieving better than this. The high profile of RE within the school makes a significant contribution to its Christian character. Pupils talk confidently about the school's core Christian values. These are represented by 'Cofe the caterpillar' designed by the school council. Everyone is encouraged and supported to live out the Christian values represented by each part of the caterpillar's body. These values are woven effectively into the school's rich and varied curriculum. This provides pupils with a wide range of experiences both inside and outside the classroom, underpinned by the school's distinctive Christian ethos. Consequently pupils enjoy school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Displays around the school are vibrant and stimulating. They lift the spirit and provide both reflection and discussion opportunities, which contribute to a deep spiritual understanding of Christian life. Pupils leave Kirkby C.E. as well adjusted, happy and caring individuals who have been well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils' awareness of Christianity as a global faith is strong. Their appreciation and understanding of the beliefs and practices of other world faiths is aided by a range of visitors and visits to other places of worship including a Gurdwara. The school has links with schools in Namibia and is involved in raising money for charities such as Macmillan Nurses.

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

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. It is the driver for the school's Christian values and has a strong Christian foundation. Worship is very well planned by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and diocesan representative, who is also a school governor. Themes are developed around the school's core values, festivals, the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. The differing needs of the pupils are met through whole school, key stage and class led worship. Planning is further enhanced by WOW (Worship on Wednesday) led monthly by the diocesan representative, who also leads Messy Church and Godly Play. There are frequent opportunities to worship in church. As a result of the varied and stimulating range of worship, pupils enjoy and highly value their worship experiences, both in school and in church. Pupils talked enthusiastically and with confidence about their worship experiences, which contribute significantly to their spiritual development. One pupil said, 'Worship makes me calm, happy and ready for work'. Another added, 'It makes us relaxed and gives us a nice feeling and time to reflect.' Prayer and reflection are regular features of all forms of worship. What pupils hear and do in worship is in their thinking during the day and reflected in their actions. Prayer, along with the well-used prayer and reflection areas in the school grounds, makes a very significant contribution towards pupils' spiritual development. Both acts of worship seen on the day of the inspection provided opportunities for quiet reflection, prayer and joyful singing. The use of

simple liturgical words at the end of the worship and the saying of the Lord's Prayer help pupils to understand the Anglican tradition. Christian festivals are celebrated and pupils learn about those of other world faiths. This enhances their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development and very effectively promotes pupils' tolerance and respect for the views and beliefs of others. However, the school recognises that pupils need to be more involved in the planning of worship themes in addition to the involvement they already have in class led worship. Respect for the act of worship is clearly evident through the willingness of children to participate, entering with reverence, listening to Bible stories, enthusiastically answering questions, participating in prayer, and reflective silence. A candle and Bible on the worship table, with a large cross above, provide a clear focal point for worship. Strong links with the church enable pupils to become familiar with aspects of church services, which they then use in school worship. Parents join the school to celebrate class led worship and at special times in church, such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas. These celebrations strengthen links between school, church and community. Although there is some evaluation of worship by staff, pupils do not yet have the opportunity to contribute to this process.

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

The headteacher, through her strong personal Christian faith, articulates with commitment, a strong vision, expressly rooted in Christian teaching. This informs all policy and practice in the school. The distinctive Christian character and vision for the school is shared, agreed and upheld by all members of the school community who are fully aware of the school's core Christian values. These can be seen in the very strong, nurturing relationships, which permeate the school. The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear understanding of what it means to lead a church school and carry out their roles very effectively, supported by relevant professional development. They have created an atmosphere underpinned by Christian values in which all staff feel their ideas are listened to and appreciated. Staff are inducted well into what is expected of them in relation to promoting the Christian ethos of the school and they regularly consider the impact on pupils of living out the mission statement. There is a clear focus on meeting the needs of the individual child through a well developed and effective self-evaluation process that places the uniqueness of each child at the heart of school improvement. One teacher said, 'The team is like a trinity, with teachers, pupils and Christ.' Governors know the school well and what it needs to do to improve further. In addition to their involvement in the life of the school and their monitoring of RE and collective worship, they receive regular RE and worship updates from the headteacher. They support and challenge the school leadership team in all areas of school improvement, ensuring that church school issues are prioritised in improvement planning. The rector and vicar visit the school regularly. Their prayerful support and involvement reaches out to all members of the school family. Governors are keen for the school to become voluntary aided and are in the process of changing its status. Pupils are confident that their voice is heard with their ideas and opinions valued and acted upon. There is a strong PTA which actively supports the work of the school through social and fund raising events. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One said 'The school feels like a little family, warm and valuing, where everyone is very supportive.' Parents readily attribute this to the strong Christ-centered ethos of the school.