



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Levens Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

1 Church Road, Levens, Kendal.

LA8 8PU

Previous inspection grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Carlisle

Local authority: Cumbria

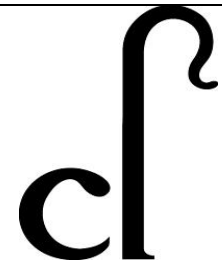
Date of inspection: 11 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 1 March 2013

School's unique reference number: 112262

Headteacher: Jane Farraday

Inspector's name and number: Ruth Wall NS 548



Diocese of Carlisle
Growing Disciples

School context

Levens School is much smaller than the average-sized rural primary school with 69 pupils on roll. Pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. The proportion of children with special educational needs is just above the national average. The headteacher was appointed in September 2015.

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

- The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to providing an inclusive education, based on Christian values.
- There are strong links with the parish church which impact positively on pupils and promote the Christian character of the school.
- Children have a good understanding of the school's distinctive Christian values. These make an impact on their relationships, with the result that they grow into compassionate individuals who are quick to take the initiative to help others.
- Spiritual development is good as a result of the opportunities provided for reflection during religious education (RE), collective worship and the wider curriculum.

Areas to improve

- Develop the governors' approach to self-evaluation and monitoring of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school in order to embed a structured approach.
- Involve all leaders of collective worship in planning. This is to ensure coherence and continuity in provision and to ensure that collective worship takes account of pupils' previous experiences.
- Ensure that the curriculum, including collective worship, provides more experience of Christian diversity. This is to extend and enrich pupils' understanding and appreciation of different expressions of Christianity.

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

Christian values are made explicit and children have a good understanding of their significance. Children's thoughtful perspectives about Christian values include, 'They can take you on the right path for life', and, 'They can put you right when you go wrong'. The entrance display has been redesigned to share the school's core values with parents and visitors. Leaders explain to parents that these values underpin all areas of school life and are the foundations for the school's approach to positive behaviour management. Parents are appreciative of the way in which the school nurtures their children and say the school's values are a good basis for life. All members of the school community know that they are valued and the ethos of trust and respect is clearly evident. In this secure environment, pupils behave very well. The school's analysis of data shows that good teaching and intervention procedures are enabling children to achieve their targets and make progress. Spiritual education is enriched through a variety of activities. One good example is the Environment Club which has enabled children to study aspects of the natural world and to understand the awe and wonder of God's creation. RE contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children enjoy and are challenged by their lessons. They study different faiths in RE and respect diversity, saying that everyone has different beliefs and can choose what to believe. The visit to a city mosque and a faith trail to find other places of worship had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to diverse religions and cultures. Children explore Christianity as a global world faith through art and music.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The headteacher, as collective worship co-ordinator, is enthusiastically driving forward improvements. Children are increasingly taking responsibility for decisions about how to make worship better and they work together to plan and lead worship. Using 'Two stars and a wish' ensures that the evaluations children give to each other are positive but highlights the next step needed for improvement. The close partnership with the parish church significantly enriches worship. Throughout the year special events are carefully planned. Reflecting on the impact of 'Experience Lent', the children's church leader said she was impressed by the children's response and their insightful questions. Church members, including the chair of governors, start each week with 'Open the Book' which is a well-established success. Theatrical elements to the retelling of Bible stories enthral the children who are always keen to take an active part. Consequently they have a good knowledge of the Bible, the life and teachings of Jesus and a developing understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God. The church team find this a mutually beneficial experience in developing relationships between the generations. Children also enjoy worship led by the vicar who, they agree, 'always makes it fun'. The headteacher has identified the need to include class teachers in planning, to ensure continuity and progression in all acts of worship. Prayer is important with examples of children's own prayers used in worship, classrooms and on the prayer tree. Children's prayers have developed to include praying for others. Reflecting on the value of peace a child wrote. 'Dear God, help us to be peacemakers in ourselves and in our homes'. Special services take place in the church and are well attended by parents. They appreciate that all children play an active part. Children do not experience a variety of different Christian traditions.

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

Stakeholders agree that the new headteacher is making positive improvements. Parents say that communication has improved significantly and they now feel involved. The headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school. One parents said, 'She embodies the Christian values...they shine through'. With the support and expertise of the senior leader she is providing an effective lead in developing the Christian character of the school through action and development initiatives. Governors, parents and children have recently been involved in selecting values to reflect the Christian character of the school. Foundation governors are successful in supporting the work of

the school as a church school, using their various and considerable skills to very good effect. They recognise the need to develop their role in contributing to strategic planning through more formal procedures in monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school. RE and collective worship are well led, with planning and evaluation contributing effectively to future development. Support and training from the diocese and mutually beneficial relationships with other church schools are playing an important role in church school development. Professional development is linked to school improvement and is preparing future leaders of church schools. Leaders and governors recognise the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. Children take their responsibilities seriously and are proud of the contribution they make to decision making through the school council and eco team. The school community values the input and significant commitment of time from church members and the vicar. The response to the focus for development from the last inspection has resulted in improvements for the school as a church school. However, leaders recognise that fully embedding good practice is an ongoing process.

SIAMS report February 2016 Levens Church of England Primary School, Levens, Kendal LA8 8PU

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