



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Idle Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Boothroyd Drive
Bradford
BD10 8LU

Diocese: Bradford

Local authority: Bradford

Dates of inspection: 7th March 2014

Date of last inspection: 14th July 2009

School's unique reference number: 107320

Headteacher: Mr John Bowers

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Linda Hodson 314

School context

Idle Church of England (VA) Primary School is an average sized primary school of 215 pupils. Situated in the northern suburbs of Bradford, it is a popular school, attracting pupils from a community with predominately semi-professional occupations. Approximately, one third of pupils are admitted to the school as a result of regular attendance at a Christian church or place of worship from another Faith. The vast majority of its pupils are of White British heritage with a below average proportion being eligible for pupil premium funding. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Idle as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Children are truly at the heart of the school and are provided with every opportunity to succeed as independent learners.
- Behaviour is exemplary and relationships between all members of the community reflect Christian values.
- The school's distinctive Christian provision for RE and collective worship, together with a rich and varied curriculum, have an outstanding impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- A high level of support and challenge, provided by local clergy and foundation governors, ensures the school's continued improvement as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Develop learning opportunities to broaden pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- Bring greater focus to the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship through systematic observations and extension of pupil voice activities.
- Ensure that all those teaching RE have opportunities to learn from the best practice within the school so that the proportion of outstanding lessons is increased.

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

At Idle, there is a very genuine commitment to develop “the whole child”, rooted in the belief that each individual is created in God’s image. This Christian mission permeates the work of the school. Leaders work tirelessly to ensure that teaching and learning are of the highest standard so that all pupils make outstanding progress, regardless of their starting points. As a result, academic standards are high. However, leaders take even greater pride in knowing that by the end of Year 6 pupils are confident, articulate and well-rounded individuals who demonstrate care and compassion for others and respect for the world in which they live. In recognition of this, all leavers complete a curriculum vitae which places value on a wider range of skills and responsibilities such as playing a musical instrument or being a “Peace Pal”. Parents confirm that Christian values are firmly embedded in every aspect of school life, resulting in a safe and nurturing environment for learning. They are clear that this results in caring and compassionate relationships between all members of the school community and in the exemplary behaviour of the children. High quality pastoral care and particularly the work of the parental involvement officer provides emotional support for children and their families and contributes to high levels of attendance. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and demonstrate a real thirst for knowledge. However, they also recognise that life brings many challenges and understand that prayer can be a particular help and comfort at those times. The school’s rich and varied curriculum, and particularly its provision for religious education (RE), reinforces understanding of the school’s distinctive Christian character and makes an outstanding contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils’ understanding of diverse cultures is enhanced through experiential learning, well-established global links and support for charitable projects. A natural extension of this work would be to develop pupils’ awareness of the diversity of Christian practices and traditions across the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Collective worship is a highly valued and important part of the school day which impacts positively on the lives of all those attending. The school’s leaders take care to ensure that acts of worship are distinctively Christian, inclusive and of a high standard. To this end, they provide guidance for all those leading worship to ensure key elements are always present. As a result, there is a greater use of Anglican prayers and responses than at the last inspection. Pupils’ understanding of Anglican traditions is further enhanced through the regular involvement of local clergy and the wider church community. Worship themes and Christian values are routinely explored within a Biblical context, giving pupils opportunities to make connections between the stories they hear and their own words and actions. This contributes to pupils’ outstanding social and moral development. The celebration of major festivals effectively develops pupils’ understanding of the importance of Jesus Christ within the Christian faith and supports a growing awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Individual acts of worship are very well planned and executed. Leaders take great care to create an appropriate atmosphere and to engage pupils in a lively and interesting way. Pupils say they enjoy worship and they welcome the opportunities they have to be actively involved, for example through reading their own prayers or joining in with action songs. Older pupils contribute to the planning and leadership of worship but, as yet, do not have a specific role in its evaluation. Governors recognise that broadening the involvement of other stakeholders and a more systematic approach to observations would improve monitoring and evaluation further. All within the school community speak highly of the opportunities for prayer within the school. Adults, in particular, appreciate the prayer breakfasts and the spontaneous coming together to support families at times of trouble. Pupils recall the use of an interactive prayer space with great enthusiasm. One said, “Even in the dark tent there was a chink of light, showing that God’s light gets everywhere.” Another said “I felt so much lighter, as if all my worries had floated away.” There can be no doubt that such opportunities make a significant contribution to pupils’ spiritual development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

The leadership of RE is highly effective. As a result of robust systems for monitoring and improvement planning the school's leaders have implemented some significant changes since the last inspection. These have had a very positive impact on pupils' attainment. By the end of Year 6 standards in RE are high, in line with those found in other core subjects. The introduction of more rigorous assessment and tracking procedures, have led to pupils making rapid progress in their learning. The formation of an RE team has led to improvements in the quality of provision, bringing fresh ideas as well as greater rigour to teaching and learning. Lesson observations, undertaken during the inspection, confirm the school's view that teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. Quality planning ensures that lessons are challenging, stimulating and interesting, with clear outcomes linked to attainment targets. Learning and recording opportunities are varied so that all pupils are fully included and any difficulty in using basic skills does not inhibit opportunities for spiritual development. Pupils are therefore extremely attentive within lessons and apply themselves equally well to both independent and group work. Units of work are often framed as questions, which provide pupils with regular opportunities to develop and articulate independent thinking. They also pose their own questions, such as "Why did Judas tell the Romans where Jesus was when he was one of the disciples?" In such instances teachers are able to respond skilfully and move the learning forward. Providing opportunities for teachers to observe the very best practice within the school would help to strengthen provision even further. The RE curriculum fully reflects the diocesan syllabus, in terms of time allocation and content. Pupils therefore develop a strong understanding of the person of Jesus Christ and of his importance in the Christian faith and have opportunities to learn about other world faiths. Uniquely, the school has developed a third attainment target "to learn to" which ensures that pupils are able to apply Christian values in their own lives and demonstrate love in action through service to others. The latter is clearly exemplified in their work with a local residential home for the elderly, involvement in community events and support for a wide range of charities.

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

The Christian mission of the school is clearly communicated and underpins the daily life of the school. The headteacher and governors are clear that the school's strong spiritual ethos is of paramount importance and this has been a starting point for all discussions with the Local Authority regarding the proposed expansion of the school. The consistently high quality of leadership provided by the school's senior leaders and the very strong involvement and commitment of foundation governors has maintained the strengths that were apparent at the last inspection and have ensured further improvement. Christian values are securely embedded in all aspects of school life and underpin key policies. These are reflected in the caring approach of a strong staff team, who ensure that children's individual needs are well met. As a result, academic standards are well above the national average and pupils invariably make outstanding progress. The impact of the school's provision on pupil's personal and spiritual development is outstanding. Systems for monitoring and evaluation provide leaders with an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and any actions they have taken have resulted in significant impact. Governors ensure that the arrangements for collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements and that staff receive appropriate training and development to maintain quality provision and support them in leadership roles. Local clergy contribute to the pastoral care provided by the school and regularly lead acts of worship. They also assist in the delivery of quality of RE, for example through conducting a role-play wedding. The school enjoys productive links with the wider church community and with other schools in the area. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and confirm that children leave as confident learners and responsible citizens.

