



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Foston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Foston
York
YO60 7QB

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: York

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Date of inspection: 7 July 2016

Date of last inspection: June 2011

School's unique reference number: 121492

Headteacher: Sarah Moore

Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby 137

School context

Foston Voluntary Controlled School is a small primary school serving Foston and surrounding villages. Almost all pupils are white British. A lower than average number of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes. The school is in collaboration with Terrington VA School. In September 2016 governors will begin the process of federating the schools. Since the last inspection there has been a complete change in staffing apart from the headteacher.

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

- The headteacher, staff and governors are fully committed to and successfully promote the inclusive Christian ethos of the school that is securely based on the values of 'Fruits of the Spirit'.
- The Christian ethos creates an inclusive learning environment that challenges and supports pupils of all abilities to make good progress.
- Christian values in action result in excellent relationships, behaviour and attitudes to work that enable all pupils to develop academically and personally.
- The links and support of All Saints' Anglican Church Foston and Thornton-le-Clay Methodist church have a significant impact on the worshipping life of the School.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the comprehensive monitoring procedures are collated to accurately identify the impact of the good practice of the school and inform development.
- Further the spiritual development of pupils by providing regular opportunities for them to plan, deliver and evaluate acts of worship.

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

The distinctive and inclusive Christian ethos of the school is securely based on the 'Fruit of the Spirit' that is used as school verse 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Against such things there is no law (Galatians 5: 22-23)'. Children understand these Christian values stating 'The Fruit of the Spirit are from a letter in the New Testament, written by Paul. They are part of what Jesus said'. Children recognise that 'values, not just joy but respect and peace in the world, can be shared by anyone, not just Christians'. They readily relate their behaviour and learning to the fruit, commenting 'Everything we do comes back to the fruit of the Spirit. Without them we would not know what to do.' The values, implemented by adults and children, permeate the daily life and routines of the school. The mind, body and soul of each individual are nurtured because Christian values are consistently demonstrated in teaching. This is supported by growth mindsets that create positive thinking, good learning behaviours and link values to everyday life. Caring relationships, behaviour and attitudes to work, are a strength of the school. The needs of each individual are identified, supported and challenged. The values of patience and kindness promote tolerance and resilience in learning. As a result all groups of pupils, whatever their ability, make good progress, with many from low starting points. The small size of cohorts means that data analysis and comparison are unreliable. Pupils are confident, polite and articulate. Pupil conferences give pupils opportunities to share their views of the school. Staff and governors use these to inform planning and development. The school council is an active voice in school. For example, they organised activities, including a game of rounders, a question session and the blessing of the Peace garden as part of the visit by Archbishop Sentamu. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is a strength of the school, securely driven by the Christian ethos. The revised policy securely links religious education (RE), worship and cross-curricular opportunities. Reflection is an established part of school life in lessons, as well as reflection areas in school and the Peace garden, These areas, including reflective questions, worry box and wishing tree further develop the spiritual awareness of children. RE has high profile because of an enthusiastic leader. She ensures cross-curricular links through a range of activities and learning opportunities. These ensure all develop deeper thinking skills, decision-making skills and enjoy opportunities to explore 'big questions'. Visits to the Multi-faith centre in Bradford and links with a multi-cultural school in York and one in Africa give pupils a good understanding of the need for mutual respect for faith and cultural diversity. They enjoy the links with Terrington school, including shared events such as the RE day. They comment 'the children at our sister school are our good friends'. Pupils show their Christian values in action, through supporting a range of charities, including sharing the proceeds from the school tuck shop.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the life of the school in exploring and reflecting on the fruit of the Spirit, their biblical backgrounds and links to daily life. Worship is a natural beginning to each day and revisits a Christian value that children recognise and reflect on for the whole day. They recognise Christian values in stories and everyday life. Worship challenges pupils' thinking and develops spiritual and moral awareness and informs their decision-making. They comment 'worship helps us to use the fruits of the Spirit'. The ethos committee of staff and clergy ensure that planning includes a range of Bible stories and stories of inspirational people. Pupils experience a range of leaders from school and the community. Pupils set up for worship and choose appropriate songs to match the theme. Older pupils lead some acts of worship and often include other members of the school. The school has identified the benefits of a more regular involvement of pupils in the planning, delivery and evaluation of worship in extending the spiritual journey of pupils. Planning gives guidance as well as flexibility for leaders to add their own perspective on stories and values. The input of clergy and members of the congregations from All Saints' Anglican and Thornton-le-Clay Methodist churches make a significant contribution to the worshipping life of the school. This includes an awareness of differences between church and chapel, as well as worship. Both are used to celebrate festival services. The links help everyone in school to understand belonging to a wider Christian worshipping community. Worship is distinctively Anglican through the use of the greeting, engagement, response and reflection. A table with a candle, cross and prayer books is a focus for worship, with the

statement 'God is just beside you, shining his sunbeams on you' shows the ever presence of God. A candle marks the beginning of worship to show 'God is with us'. Children recognise the symbolism of the candle as 'Jesus the light of the world' and explain that it shows that 'God is with us to spread joy to everyone'. Pupils also describe the significance of other Christian symbols, including the cross, dove and rainbow. They are developing a good understanding of the Trinity, describing 'God the Father made the world around us; God the Son is Jesus, who helps people with miracles and shows us how to help others and God the Holy Spirit, who is inside us to help us work and know about right and wrong'. Pupils and adults create a quiet atmosphere for worship. They are engaged and involved by the thought provoking delivery of leaders. Pupils are involved in role-play and all share thoughts and responses. As a result, links between values, such as truth and trust and their place in everyday life, are securely illustrated. Pupils sing with joy and enthusiasm, inspired by the animated text on the screen. Prayer is central to the worshipping life of the school. Children confidently recite the Lord's Prayer with understanding. They write and share prayers that are collated in prayer books used in worship. Children understand prayer as 'a time to talk to God and ask for help or say sorry'. They also comment 'God listens to every prayer, even if it is not said aloud'. A foundation governor is a frequent visitor to worship. Her observations and informal discussions with children and staff inform reports to governors. The collective worship action plan is annotated to show development and the meeting of termly targets.

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

Leaders and managers express a clear vision 'working together supported by our Christian ethos we provide children with a dynamic curriculum that encourages creativity curiosity and a love of learning and ability to relate to others and the skill for use in an ever-changing world.' This reflects their high aspirations and commitment to Christian values and to the recognition of RE and worship as central to the distinctive Christian character of the school. As a result Christian values underpin the practice and policy of the school. Christian values inform decision-making and planning by governors 'as a natural part of Christian discussion'. Governors have reviewed the mission statement and are revising policy documents to ensure they fully reflect the Christian ethos and values that are securely embedded in the practice of the school. Training by the foundation governor on church school evaluation has been shared with governors to raise their understanding of working in a church school. Governors know how RE, worship and the Christian ethos fully impact on the curriculum, behaviour and attitudes because of learning walks, book scrutiny and discussions. Governors are active in their support, visits and discussions. Meetings begin with a prayer to reflect the Christian foundation of the school. Staff share constant dialogue and feedback from courses that is shared with governors. The views of the whole school community are regularly sought and valued. The range of monitoring and evaluation procedures in place has not yet been collated in self-evaluation to give a full and accurate picture of the good practice seen in school. However, the school development plan is monitored to ensure progress on termly milestones. This includes an action plan to further develop the role, knowledge and challenge of governors. Parents share their obvious pride in the school and the impact of its ethos on the academic and personal development of children. A typical comment is 'the fruits of the Spirit give a sense of belonging and children show them at home and school'. Parents also recognise how the school is inclusive and provides 'excellent support for each child, whatever their individual needs may be'. They also comment on the respect and support of children for each other. The collaboration with Terrington School enables shared events for pupils, as well as opportunities for staff to plan and share expertise together. This and the secondment of a senior teacher and another staff member as a leading teacher has provided opportunities for staff to experience leadership roles within a church school.

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