



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



 The **Methodist Church**

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

### Holy Trinity Church of England Academy

Brockley Avenue  
South Shields  
NE34 0TS

**Diocese: Durham**

Local authority: **N/A**

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Date of last inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2010

Current inspection grade: Good

School's unique reference number: 141 160

Headteacher: Tina Murphy

Inspector's name and number: Valerie Hall (859)

### School context

This medium-sized primary school serves an area with a deprivation factor that is significantly higher than the national average. Nearly all pupils are of white British heritage. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average. There are a large number of pupils entitled to free school meals. The head teacher is a National Leader for education. The school became an academy in 2014. It is a Fresh Start school and has become a National Support School in recognition of its capacity to raise standards rapidly. School frequently contributes to events in the local church and in the diocese. The vicar is a member of the governing body.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness Holy Trinity Church of England Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The outstanding pastoral care and support afforded to its children and community which lives out the Christian message that 'everyone is loved' is being lived out day by day
- The vision, commitment and passion of the head teacher in promoting Christian values across the school results in an ethos which drives continuous improvement
- The outstandingly positive relationships between all stakeholders are promoted relentlessly by leaders; as a consequence, outcomes for all children are at least good.
- Governance benefits hugely from the strong focus on gospel values; they underpin all decisions made by school

### Areas to improve

- Involve children in planning and leading a wide range of worship to broaden and develop spirituality across the school community.
- Regularly involve governors and clergy in planning, supporting and evaluating a wider

range of worship activities so that systematic monitoring forms an integral part of the self-evaluation process.

- Embed the SIAMS evaluation schedule into governors strategic planning and analysis of performance data so that the Christian character of the school is identified and benchmarked even more robustly.

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

Holy Trinity Academy is a fully inclusive school where standards achieved by learners are high. This is in line with its ethos statement which says that school is, *'developing a Christ centred community where each person can become what God has made them to be'*. Progress and attainment are good and improving. Disadvantaged children and those with special educational needs succeed equally as well as their peers. The head teacher and her deputy have a very clear vision; its values are well known by all. The school are willing to do all they can to meet the needs of children who often face difficulty in their lives. The head teacher says, 'it may not be our job, but we do it anyway', and this is lived out in the work the school does.

Relationships within and beyond school have a very special quality and are valued and promoted. One staff member spoke of learning to love teaching again when he moved from another place. He felt supported and challenged in equal measure. One parent spoke movingly about arriving with very few belongings but was given uniform and PE kit so that her child felt included. Behaviour is impeccable. Throughout the day children moved about quietly and respectfully and were universally polite to adults and to each other. There is a strong reliance on God and the teachings of Jesus. Children and stakeholders recognise the value of having a Christian basis for their lives and one child spoke about how *'God is with us when no one else is'*. The rich curriculum ensures children understand the wider world in which they live. They learn about other cultures and faiths. Parents spoke about a visit to a Hindu temple and the positive effect it had on her child's view of those of other faiths. Parents also speak very positively about the newly introduced 'Kidsafe' programme which helps children understand about all aspects of personal safety, which is of paramount importance to school leaders. Children feel safe and loved. Parents also feel school listens to them and their concerns and helps children learn to deal with challenging issues with increasing independence. They feel school responds to them in a way that is calm, assertive and confidential. Parents feel respected. The contribution of religious education (RE) to the distinctiveness of this school is significant. School have worked tirelessly to improve RE since the last inspection and it is now a significant strength. Children can all say in detail how it helps them personally, by helping them to make the right decisions and parents can say how their children benefit from learning Bible stories and developing gospel values.

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

Collective worship is well planned by the head teacher, advised by the vicar. It is obviously valued by all. One act of worship including the whole school was observed. It was thorough and well-planned to meet the needs of learners, focussing on the story of the man who built his house on the sand. Children understood the central theme and how it applied to their lives. Singing was lively and the children clearly enjoy it and see it as a valuable part of worship. Prayer was calm and respectful. Worship themes are planned on a half termly basis by the head teacher. There is a daily act of collective worship led by the head teacher, the deputy and the vicar on a rota basis. There is also an act of worship led by each class in turn and parents are invited to watch. Governors also attend. There are other worship events in the local church, All Saints, which school contributes to. Children take part in local and deanery events such as leavers' services and Anglican festivals such as Easter and Christmas. They also contribute to Christian community events, such as Action Station, a food bank collection and the soup kitchen. There are well-planned and utilised worship areas around school and every class has a reflection area which the children contribute to and can speak about. Children talk

about using worship and reflection areas at times when they have felt angry or needed to calm down. As a consequence of this work, children are beginning to see prayer as a natural extension of their lives and use it as a tool to deal with a range of events. In particular, children talk movingly about when a friend died and they used the areas to think about him and share memories of him. The connection between worship and values and personal, social and health education is clear. Adults in school also talk about times when they have supported children and made use of reflection areas themselves alongside children. As a result, the whole community speaks convincingly of the value of prayer and worship in this school. Another child told of a time when she had heard a story in worship and felt that she was quite cheeky to adults at home. She felt worship helped her to think hard about how she behaved. Adults and children talk about specific stories and how the work and life of Jesus is relevant to their lives. They included the story of Jesus walking on water and the prodigal son. They can talk about how this affects their relationships with others and how they develop trust. The spirituality developed through collective worship underpins much of what the school does. This is evident in school's use of a poem, 'A People Place', by William J Crocker, to remind the whole community about its core Christian values. This is displayed in the hall where most collective worship takes place and is a constant reminder to all about what is important in this school. However leaders do not yet include children in systematic contributions to worship in all its forms. They do not yet read prayers or lead in aspects of worship although they help plan their own class worship. Children do not yet plan any aspects of whole-school worship or contribute to its development. There is no formal evaluation of worship by anyone other than the head teacher, although governors are well informed about planning for worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Since the last inspection standards have risen dramatically and the leadership of RE is outstanding in all aspects. There is a newly appointed RE leader, who is part of the leadership team and has contributed significantly to an increase in the profile of the subject across school. The leader has outstanding subject knowledge and inspires others. RE is truly seen as a core subject and its contribution to the Christian character is clearly understood by all. Standards in RE have risen as a result of this renewed focus. There is highly robust scrutiny in this subject including book review, assessment scrutiny and a very clear focus on ensuring standards are as high as they are in other subjects. Review of scrap books and children's work showed that there is a varied and interesting curriculum enhanced by creative teaching and a drive for the highest standards. Scrap books also contain evidence of RE learning from acts of worship, making the links explicit to children. Assessment of RE is very rigorous and takes place termly. The leader has a clear view of the attainment and progress of all children including those eligible for pupil premium and free school meals. The leader moderates work and offers support and guidance to teachers. The leader is an outstanding role model and has a very clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning in her subject. RE is currently being reviewed to encourage creativity with a purpose, so that every learning experience is of high value to learners' lives. Reports are produced for governors so they are well informed and detailed analyses of findings are produced and acted upon. The head teacher prioritises this in school; learners benefit from highly focussed teaching as a consequence. The observation of 3 lessons across 3 key stages showed that practice in the subject is of a very high standard. This is particularly so in foundation stage where children were keen to learn and showed great enthusiasm. Learners in all lessons were enthusiastic and worked well. One child knew that he was 'precious' to his teacher and likened it to other precious objects he could describe. The teaching of RE ensures that children can make links with Christian teaching and values. A focus for the school is to ensure that they see God as a trusted person. A well thought out policy says that children should 'develop a sense of community beyond the school and have experience of a worshipping community' This cements the link between RE, worship and Christian belonging. It also makes clear the links between the teaching of RE and spiritual, moral social and cultural learning. Children learn about other faiths; displays and discussion with children support this view.

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

The inspired leadership of this outstanding school and the deeply held conviction of the head teacher that 'every child is important' ensure that Holy Trinity Academy is an outstanding church school. The head teacher and deputy head have relentless focus on the well-being of all children. This ensures that all adults have excellent role models and follow leaders in their care for children and the most vulnerable in the community. There are a number of new staff and all say that they enjoy the clarity of expectation they experience. The teaching of Christian values is a strength of the school and everyone can describe what they are and how they were planned and adopted. They were drawn up jointly by the interim governing body when the schools were amalgamated and are lived out every day by all staff and governors. Since the amalgamation, there has been a focus on ensuring that staff work together for the good of all children. The success of this is clearly seen in the strong relationships, evident at all levels. There is a clear emphasis on succession planning and staff development. A number of staff have gone on to promoted posts in other schools and some remaining are accepting the opportunity to lead aspects of the school's work. The head teacher and deputy constantly review practice and ethos in school and seek to improve it. One example of this is the use of teaching assistants at playtime and lunchtime to improve behaviour. The head teacher describes playtimes as an extension of the learning experience and as a result there are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour and children have an increased sense of autonomy and responsibility for their own behaviour. The school ethos statement of 'nurturing and developing skills and attitudes necessary for children to make moral choices and decisions' is exemplified here with outstanding results. Parents are very positive about school leadership. Barriers have been broken down and parents know they are welcome and not judged. They can talk with confidence about the values of the school and how they see their children demonstrating them. Parents say children understand about consequences and respect them. Incidents of bullying are rare, including prejudice-based bullying, but parents feel they are acted upon swiftly and with great impact. They overwhelmingly support and trust school leaders. The governing body do not yet evaluate the success of the school as a church school but the head teacher keeps them informed about progress in all areas and about any planned developments. They take an interest in the school and its success, including joining leaders on learning walks and attending events in school. Leaders place an emphasis on professional development for all teachers and teaching assistants. Governors would be even more effective if they had access to professional development to enhance their skills in evaluating the distinctiveness of the school as a church school.

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