



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Baldwins Gate CE (VC) Primary School

Baldwins Gate
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 5DF

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 30 April 2015

Date of last inspection: 28 April 2010

School's unique reference number: 8603137

Headteacher: Claire Lowe

Inspector's name and number: Huw D Bishop NS344

School context

Baldwins Gate Primary School is a small rural school with close links to the parishes of Whitmore, Chapel Chorlton and Maer. The majority of pupils live within the local community and are of White British Heritage. The number of students with special educational needs is high. The school is popular and oversubscribed. When last inspected by Ofsted in 2012, it was judged to be a good school. The school is about to embark on a partnership in a multi academy trust with a local high school and one other community primary school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Baldwins Gate Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The commitment of the headteacher and all in the school to its caring and inclusive ethos, based on Christian values.
- The supportive environment in which all pupils learn well.
- The partnership with the parish church which nurtures a clear understanding of Christian and Anglican identity.
- The impact that teaching in religious education has on pupils' understanding of Christianity and other faiths within a culture that celebrates diversity.

Areas to improve

- Provide more structured opportunities for pupils to lead and take a more active role in collective worship.
- Develop the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness.

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

The school's mission statement is clear in its commitment to 'opening gates with learning, faith and care' through relationships in school and partnerships within the local community. Christian values are openly expressed and impact well on pupils' progress and achievement through effective teaching, particularly in religious education. This can be seen clearly through excellent

relationships, good behaviour and systems that are having an impact on improving standards. Pupils achieve well in school, with current outcomes above the national averages. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. The programme of Christian values and particularly the importance of truth, respect and tolerance, is having a very positive impact on the character of the school and the spiritual development of pupils. The school is working very hard to embed these values across the curriculum and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy expressing their views and opinions through questions and surveys. The school celebrates inclusivity as a valued part of diversity. *'The school helps me to learn about my own religion and appreciate others so that I can be a better person'* was the view of a Muslim pupil. The school has re-structured its religious education curriculum and follows the agreed syllabus of the local authority and the diocese. The school environment is extremely attractive and well cared for and provides pupils with many opportunities to develop aspects of Christian spirituality. Thoughtful displays and relevant symbols support the understanding of Christian values. Adults at the school are good role models, and volunteers from the parish who lead the 'Wednesday Club', with its emphasis on raising the Church's profile and Christian nurture based on Bible teaching, are outstanding in their ministry to the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school shows a strong commitment to collective worship by providing quality daily acts of worship either for the whole school or in class. Pupils were clear that worship not only identified the school's distinctive ethos, but it also enabled them to think about issues in school as well as the community and the part they played as individuals. *'Everyone comes together as a community – we share ideas about what we believe'* was the view of a group of pupils. Pupils say the Lord's Prayer and those spoken to during the inspection could explain their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The themes for worship reflect the 'Values for Life' programme which supports the school's core values. Pupils comment how much they enjoy worship and how they understand its importance in the school's daily routine. They would welcome the opportunity to be more involved in creating and delivering worship. The content of all collective worship in the school is Christian and the teaching of Jesus and the Bible is central. The altar is the central focus in the hall and this reflects the theme. Key events from the Christian calendar are celebrated in school and pupils go the parish church for major festivals. The events of Holy Week are of particular significance within collective worship and each class leads an assembly re-enacting those events. The story of the Last Supper is used to highlight the Church's teaching on the Holy Eucharist and pupils share bread and grapes as symbols. Worship is led mainly by the headteacher and the parish priest. Prayer and reflection are central in collective worship and pupils value the 'prayer bowl' in the hall where they are encouraged to pray for others, as well as compose their own prayers, which are then used during collective worship.

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

The Christian vision, based upon Christian values is clearly encouraged in the school's mission statement and has been led by the vision of the headteacher and supported by staff and foundation governors. Staff and parents recognise the importance of this vision and parents increasingly contribute to the values programme. *'The church plays its part in the life of the school, there is good leadership because the parish priest works closely with the headteacher'* was the view of a group of parents. Pupils value the leadership opportunities they are given, say they are listened to and feel their views make a difference. Parish representatives say that 'the strength of the school is in the spirituality of the children' and it is clear that pupils value the nurture that is offered by the local church. Pupils are presented with Bibles by the parish when they leave school in Year 6. The school's inclusive vision has enabled an ongoing evaluation of the school's Christian character. Also, the impact of work by the co-ordinator for religious education has been successful in implementing strategies which support the school's Christian heritage through the values programme. Governors are supportive of the school's ethos and proud of pupils'

success. However, a closer and more systematic monitoring of its Christian character at all leadership levels would ensure that its distinctiveness and effectiveness is firmly embedded and protects the school's Church of England status as it moves into a new chapter in its development as part of a multi-academy trust.

SIAMS report April 2015 Baldwins Gate CE (VC) Primary School ST5 5DF