



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Prees Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School and Nursery

Cross End
Prees
Whitchurch
SY13 2ER

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Shropshire

Dates of inspection: 1 October 2015

Date of last inspection: 1 December 2010

School's unique reference number: 123494

Headteacher: Yvette McDaniel

Inspector's name and number: Allyson Taylor 768

School context

Prees Church of England Primary school is a small rural school with 151 learners on roll, taught in seven classes. The majority of learners are of white British background. There are a significant number of children on roll with additional learning and social needs. The school offers nursery and pre-school provision on site. Wrap around care is also provided.

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

- Strong leadership, rooted in Christian principles, has enhanced the Christian character of the school and created a culture of shared leadership among all staff.
- The contribution religious education (RE) makes to pupils' learning and personal development is very good.
- Excellent partnerships with the parish church, diocese, parents and the wider community demonstrate the school living out its Christian vision.

Areas to improve

- Embed written systems for governors to monitor the Christian character, RE and worship so the impact of actions may be more readily assessed.
- Extend learners' study of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- Create a clear definition of spirituality within the RE policy to enable staff to plan more opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.

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

Prees school is an inclusive learning community which focuses on individual needs. It is motivated by a mission based on the 'fruit of the spirit.' Many learners have complex medical, learning, behavioural and social needs. The school's Christian character and values are at the heart of meeting these needs. The headteacher describes staff as: 'champions for the children.' All adults are united in a shared vision for ensuring learners are nurtured to be 'who God means them to be.' The core Christian values, particularly of respect, are reference points throughout the school day. Every opportunity is taken to refer to the values in lessons and at playtimes. This is fundamental to the holistic approach to meeting needs. Learners' self-esteem is promoted and so they are able to face challenges in their learning. Academic progress, often from very low starting points, is generally good and year 6 children achieve some test results that are broadly in line with other schools nationally. Positive relationships are fostered and the behaviour of learners has improved as a result of the application of Christian values. For example, learners can nominate each other for a values award in Friday's celebration assembly. Relationships between adults and learners are mutually respectful. Learners who need additional help are ably supported by key staff, notably the learning mentor. She provides invaluable guidance for parents as well as children. All adults, however, play a vital role in ensuring learners feel safe and happy. Several staff commented that they feel empowered in their roles, that they feel valued and so are more able to help the children in their care. The school's commitment to sport is impressive. The activities provided have a good impact on the personal development of learners. RE makes a very positive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners. The subject gives learners a sense of their place in the world. It explores Christianity and other faiths with a focus on learning from the examples of religion. Learners have less understanding that Christianity is itself a multi-cultural world faith. Standards in RE are high and the subject supports critical thinking and broader literacy skills. The policy for RE and spirituality does not yet state how spirituality is defined within the school's context. This restricts planning for deeper spiritual development through RE and the wider curriculum.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has developed considerably since the last inspection. It is popular with all ages in the school community who describe the greater spiritual focus introduced by the headteacher. All teachers now lead acts of key stage worship. The programme for worship gives prominence to the Bible and teachings of Jesus. Worship is planned to explore the value for the half term within a Christian context. Themes are also chosen which may be relevant to current affairs and learners' interests. For example, worship is planned to consider the issues of homelessness and the refugee crisis. The school marks key dates and festivals in the Church's calendar. Learners, therefore, have some understanding of Anglican traditions, including the Eucharist, but have as yet little awareness of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The headteacher and incumbent work together to plan the programme for worship. The incumbent leads worship each week and is a much-loved member of the school community. He wants the children to see the parish church next door as 'their church' and has allocated a particular doorway for school use. 'Chadzclub' is run after school by the incumbent and a foundation governor and it complements the values explored in worship. The school council gathers learners' views and responses to worship. Their findings have prompted changes, such as sitting in a horseshoe rather than in rows. Classes are given the opportunity to lead worship on occasion. Prayer and time for reflection are appreciated by adults and children and opportunities for these are offered at lunchtime and home time as well as during worship. Learners particularly enjoy writing and reading their own prayers as well as volunteering to help with drama activities in worship. Worship is integral to the school's vision; its impact on the self-esteem and well-being of many in the school community is deep and lasting. One learner commented that worship helps him feel at peace with himself and others.

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

The vision of school leaders shines in a mission statement which is clearly rooted in gospel values. Governors are very involved in the day to day life of the school. They give clear strategic direction to staff, demonstrating that all go the extra mile in the spirit of Christian service. Notable is the way members of staff and governors communicate regularly about all aspects of the school. This is a tribute to the climate of shared leadership developed by the headteacher. Staff and governors meet to discuss and draft the self-evaluation and development plans together. These show due attention to developing the Christian character but with an exemplary focus on ensuring the Christian values translate into improved behaviour and attitudes to learning. As such, the areas for development from the last inspection have been met. Monitoring by governors is at present conducted through informal discussions and visits. Governing body minutes and other documents do not accurately reflect how involved governors are. The school has faced and overcome several challenges in raising academic standards and in meeting the complex needs of many learners. The core Christian values of respect, resilience, friendship and perseverance support the decisions made, for example, to appoint additional staff to meet these needs. Governors also ensure all members of staff receive professional development, particularly in RE and through partnerships with the Teaching Alliance. Governors express the view that children with special needs enrich the community and give more than they receive. They acknowledge they have a Christian duty to welcome and embrace all children, regardless of background. All leaders have a secure understanding of the school's performance. There is a considered focus on personal development, positive behaviour and well-being which are regarded as essential to learning. As a result, progress across the year groups is sustained and the majority of learners achieve expected progress by the end of year 6. Governors ensure that statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. The RE coordinator provides outstanding subject leadership and she is well-supported in her role. Leaders and staff at Prees school provide excellent role models for each other and the children they nurture. Partnerships with St. Chad's church have been transformed under the guidance of the incumbent. He and the foundation governors are pivotal to the success of the school as a church school. Leaders are highly regarded by parents who find all staff approachable and exceptionally caring. Parents state that the school is a safe haven, providing stability for all. This is the result of a Christian community in action where all strive to live out their Christian vision.

SIAMS report October 2015 Prees VC Church of England Primary School SY13 2ER