

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Heworth Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

53 Heworth Road  
York  
YO31 0AA

#### **Diocese: York**

Local authority: City of York  
Dates of inspection: May 1<sup>st</sup> 2012  
Date of last inspection: November 29<sup>th</sup> 2006  
School's unique reference number: 121605  
Headteacher: Simon Biddlestone  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs C A Roberts 469

#### **School context**

Heworth is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are White British. A very small number is from minority ethnic groups. Almost all pupils' first language is English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School status, Activemark, Artsmark (gold) and Sing Up! (gold). Since the last SIAS inspection a new headteacher has been appointed.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Heworth Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Heworth Primary has an exemplary Christian character and is a worshipping community where everyone is valued and special. This has an outstanding impact not only on children and all stakeholders in school, but also the local community. Children achieve well both academically and personally.

#### **Established strengths**

- The strong Christian values that underpin all aspects of school life.
- The high status given to religious education (RE) and collective worship.
- The strong links with the local churches and community.

#### **Focus for development**

- Involve a link governor in monitoring and evaluating all RE lessons to ensure high quality teaching and learning continues.
- Develop a formal system for governors to monitor and evaluate the school as a church school through further use of the SIAS toolkit.

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

Christian values are top priority at Heworth Primary and run through everything the school does. These powerfully motivate the whole school community and they support pupils in their goals whether academic or personal. Consequently children feel valued and cared for. Pupils know that this is a church school and give examples such as: 'we learn lots about Jesus', 'we have prayers', 'we go to church', and 'we learn about Christianity'. Pupils are also very clear about Christian values such as forgiveness and say 'you are given a fresh start and shown forgiveness if you quarrel'. The Christian character has a major impact on preparing learners to become responsible citizens, for example through themed weeks on responsibility for the rain forests, service to others at Harvest, working with Age UK, and Sing Up leaders. Relationships are excellent, based on Christian values, with adults in school being exemplary role models. Pupils state they are 'treated with respect', and that 'friendship is very important in school'. The physical environment makes an excellent contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example with displays linking school core values to everyday life and a display with examples of what children value. There are also areas where children can reflect when they need to.

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

High quality and meaningful worship is at the heart of Heworth school. It is creative, vibrant, joyful, humorous, reflective and thought provoking. Consequently it has an outstanding impact on children and the school community. Children say 'worship makes me want to be more thankful' and 'the story of Jonah and the whale made me think that even if you are scared, you should always do the right thing'. Worship is carefully and thoughtfully planned covering themes related to Christian values, Bible accounts and Christian festivals. Use of upbeat Christian music, Power Point presentations and the very creative communication with Cliff the dog, engages children. This ensures they have a rich and exciting journey within their worship. Children enjoy the variety of visitors such as the local vicar, Methodist Minister, a local Christian group YoYo and input from headteacher and staff, as well as their peers. All staff attend worship as it is inclusive, affirming and supports the day to day life of the school. This also emphasises the importance of worship to everyone. Children really value the opportunity to sing and wholeheartedly agree that their new school song, written by everyone in school reflects their school values such as 'showing we care' and 'celebrating Christianity'. Reflection and prayer, including the Lord's Prayer are woven into all aspects of worship and children find this time extremely important. For example one child stated 'reflection helps me think about what I should do in future, being more thankful and forgiving'. The Anglican dimension is developed through the symbolism of Cross, Bible and lighted candle and through school involvement in the monthly Trinity Praise in church and also through celebrating Christian festivals. A group including children evaluate the impact and effectiveness of worship ensuring it evolves and new ideas are constantly emerging.

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

RE is well led by a very committed member of staff. The RE co-ordinator and her team have a real passion and enthusiasm for this important subject. Planning is thorough and creative to ensure continuity and progression. There is equal emphasis on Learning about (AT1) and Learning from Religion (AT2). Lessons are engaging and teachers deploy a wide range of learning strategies to support learning such as using artefacts and group work. Consequently standards are good and in line with other core subjects. Creative and purposeful assessment tasks are undertaken for every unit of work and results from these are used to inform further planning. Children are very enthusiastic about RE as they have opportunity to reflect and they enjoy learning about different faiths. For example, children say 'we like to give our opinions', and 'you can be your own person and have your own thoughts and I love this about RE'. Pupil understanding of community cohesion is deepened and supported by visits to the church and mosque, as well as the annual Diversity Week. RE is excellent at promoting the Christian character of the school, particularly learning about global Christianity, Christian values, ideas about belonging through baptism, and Christian symbolism. Children feel confident and able to express their own beliefs without fear or ridicule and this is the culture nurtured throughout school. RE has a high status in school and plans are now in place to involve a link governor in monitoring and evaluating RE.

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

The school is led by a very dedicated headteacher who has a clear and strong Christian vision. Senior leaders, staff and governors work extremely hard to ensure the vision is promoted and runs through school life like a golden thread. Reviews of the vision and values take place on a regular basis. Everyone, including pupils, clearly articulates this vision and say how it impacts on attitudes and behaviour. Governors and leaders are reflective, honest and open, always looking for ways to further embed the core values. For example they are looking to organise their governors meetings around the five core values. Governors have a wealth of knowledge about the school, are hard-working and proud to serve the community. Recent training on self-evaluation has resulted in further planned good practice through the use of the SIAS toolkit. Leaders have a clear idea about succession planning for church schools and also regularly review staff opportunities for CPD. Parents are extremely pleased and proud of the school as a church school and say everyone works in the spirit of Christian values. This encourages children 'to look after each other', and show 'real respect for each other'. There are strong links with the local church and community. For example, pastoral and worship visits from the vicar, special services in church, church members volunteer in school, school and church joint trips, Play and Praise, and Kids Rock. The school has recently had links with schools globally in Kenya and Uganda.