



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School

Breaston Avenue
Leigh
WN7 3DJ

Methodist District: Bolton and Rochdale

Local authority: Wigan

Dates of inspection: 19 June 2014

Date of last inspection: Not previously inspected

School's unique reference number: 140053

Executive Headteacher: Julie-Ann Hewitt Associate headteacher: Amy Burkes

Inspector's name and number: John Horwood NS177

School context

The school is smaller than the average size primary school with 201 pupils on roll plus 43 part time children in the Nursery. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with a few who speak English as an additional language. The school became an academy in September 2013. It is part of the Acorn Trust which is a multi-academy trust under the umbrella of the Methodist Academy and School Trust (MAST). The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School as a Methodist school are outstanding

- The executive headteacher leads by example and her strong faith and her determination that every child should succeed permeate throughout the school ensuring equal opportunities and the absence of any discrimination.
- The promotion of Christian values by all staff within the school has an excellent impact on pupils and they develop into mature, sensible and caring individuals whose behaviour is outstanding.
- Pupils' excellent responses to Christian values impact on their attitudes to learning, the progress they make and the outstanding relationships and mutual respect within the whole school community.
- Methodist traditions and the work of John Wesley are well-promoted by leaders, governors and Chapel. They have a lasting impact on pupils which is reflected in their love of singing and their pride in singing a musical version of the John Wesley Rule. Pupils have a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Areas to improve

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to meet pupils from different cultural and faith backgrounds in order to prepare them better for future life in a multi-cultural society.

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

The mission statement reflects the determination to provide a caring environment where every child can achieve their full potential and where Christian values are paramount. The values the school promotes are clearly identified as: love; justice; service and stewardship; peace and forgiveness; generosity and thankfulness; respect; and teamwork. These values are recognised by staff, pupils and parents. They demonstrate the Christian character of the school through its welcoming and caring ethos. There is a positive and happy start to the day when families arrive in the morning. Some attend and are supported within the breakfast club. Parents and pupils are greeted by the executive headteacher and/or the associate headteacher at the school entrance. The school has an open door policy to enable parents to talk with staff about any concerns. Parents spoken to during the inspection were very clear that they knew about the school being a church school and that its Christian character had a good impact on their child's education and development. They expressed the view that even if their faith was not strong the Christian values promoted within the school were what they wanted for their child. The Christian character of the school is visible within its name and all forms of communication with parents. The walls inside the school celebrate pupils' written and art work about the Christian values and about Methodist traditions. For example, the association with the life and work of John Wesley is evidenced by the John Wesley Rule being displayed around the school and being fundamental to many of its values. The school works well with pupils and parents to support their attendance which is well above average and exclusions are rare. All stakeholders recognise the partnership with the adjoining Chapel as supporting the school's Christian character exceptionally well. Pupils, staff, governors and parents all identify the outstanding care provided as the most significant feature of the school which ensures all pupils are supported to achieve their best. For example, the school provides a nurture group for those who need extra help and fund a pastoral manager to work with pupils and families. Pupils say they learn well because teachers respect them and make lessons fun. Pupils say they enjoy school and this was seen in their outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning. Every pupil is valued as an individual ensuring that pupils of all abilities are able to make similar progress in lessons. All adults set good examples to pupils and this promotes mutual respect. Pupils' spiritual and moral development are outstanding for their age. They know about the life and teaching of John Wesley and how his work impacts on peoples' lives. Pupils learn and understand about Christianity being a multi-cultural world faith but have limited opportunities to meet children from different faiths and cultures. They confidently discuss the key features of Methodist practice based on what they had been taught as well as their experiences of services. Pupils' love of singing is outstanding and they showed this both during worship and wanting to sing for the inspector. Pupils talk confidently about religious education (RE) lessons and how they impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Year 6 pupils had, at their own request, prepared a power-point presentation of their work in RE to show the inspector. Their outstanding spiritual development is demonstrated through their respect and understanding shown to all members of the school community. Observation of RE lessons, work in pupils' books and displays around the school demonstrate how RE provides excellent support to their spiritual and moral development. Other activities, such as a recent art project, demonstrate similar contributions from other curriculum areas.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship takes place at the start of the day to form a 'bridge' between home and school. Worship is well-planned and led by a range of people from the school, the Chapel and from the Methodist community. The collective worship seen during the inspection demonstrated that adults and pupils all joined in the worship with enthusiasm. Singing was of high quality and pupils eagerly joined in purposeful discussion with the person next to them about the theme and joined in 'role play' opportunities with enthusiasm. Their behaviour and their attitudes to worship were outstanding. The impact of the worship is seen in the way pupils adopt Christian values and the way they join in with prayer. Information and

communication technology was used extremely well in the worship seen with an animated image of John Wesley talking to them creating amazement and clearly a memorable impact on them. Pupils value the prayers during worship, at lunch time and at the end of the day. They also like having the prayer spaces in the classroom which they can use when they need to reflect or pray. Pupils know that this is a feature of being a church school and value the opportunity for personal prayer. The school's collective worship policy is well embedded into school routines. Pupils attend services in the adjacent Chapel and this further develops their understanding of Methodist traditions and practice. Pupils have regular opportunities to work with the youth enabler from the chapel to plan and lead worship. The recently appointed Presbyter spends time with groups of pupils, following worship in the Chapel, helping them develop their spiritual understanding further. Pupils talk freely about all aspects of their faith including the Bible, the Church's year and Christian festivals. Pupils' work shows that they understand the importance of Jesus Christ to the Christian faith. It also shows an understanding, appropriate for their age, of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Year 6 pupils write their own version of the Covenant Prayer. The impact of collective worship on pupils and staff is monitored and evaluated regularly by the senior management team and the Presbyter. Foundation governors attend worship on a regular basis. These discussions and observations are used to inform future planning.

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

The executive headteacher and the associate headteacher work as an excellent team to lead by example in promoting the school as an outstanding church school based on their strong faith. They ensure that Christian values permeate throughout the school activities and support the development of every pupil to their full ability. This has led to consistently high performance in all aspects of pupils academic and personal skills. The leaders' self-evaluation of the school as a church school is comprehensive and accurate and is fully supported by the inspection evidence. This demonstrates that leaders have a secure and accurate understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness. They can clearly demonstrate that, whilst focusing on the whole child and the needs of the community, they have maintained the high standards. Leaders, staff and governors work tirelessly as a strong and united team to ensure that this is an outstanding church school to support pupils both academically and as an integral part of the Methodist community. The partnerships with the foundation governors, the Chapel and the Methodist community are excellent. They work together for the mutual benefit of pupils and the community. For example, joint meetings led to the school being able to use a room in the Chapel for its nurture group until the new building was ready. Recently a series of 'Messy Church' sessions were introduced by the foundation governors, Presbyter and Chapel. These engaged pupils in a range of creative opportunities within the Chapel and brought families and the Chapel community together. Pupils understand the wider communities and follow the worldwide mission of the church by supporting charities and children overseas. Pupils organise fund raising events for charities both local and global. The governing body, the Chapel community and the Bolton and Rochdale Methodist District promote, monitor and review the effectiveness of the school as a church school. Foundation governors are dedicated and actively involved with the school. The partnerships are strong but there is a determination to improve them further. To develop future potential leaders of Church schools there is a strong focus on professional development of all staff and a comprehensive range of training is carried out. Leaders recognise the important contribution that RE and collective worship make within the school and give a high priority to supporting their leadership. Parents spoken to during the inspection were all very pleased with the school and the Christian values it promotes. Parents support the school well, are actively involved in school events, attend Chapel for events such as Education Sunday and are able to talk to senior staff when they bring their child to school.

SIAMS report June 2014 Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School, Leigh, WN7 3DJ