



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

### Forest of Galtres Anglican/Methodist Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Station Lane  
Shipton-by-Beningbrough  
York  
YO30 1AG

#### Diocese: York

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Date of inspection: 5 June 2014

Date of last inspection: June 2009

School's unique reference number: 121601

Headteacher: Allyson Buckton

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter MA 244

#### School context

Forest of Galtres Primary School enjoys a unique position as the only joint Anglican/Methodist School in North Yorkshire. Currently there are 185 pupils on roll, most of whom are from a White British background. Very few of these pupils are from vulnerable groups and there are a number of pupils achieving well above age related expectations. The headteacher has been in post since January 2014. A chaplain was appointed in March 2014, following the closure of the Methodist chapel in the village.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Forest of Galtres as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The high quality of religious education [RE], which contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual development, because of its exceptional leadership by the RE subject leader, whose work in the school is instrumental.
- The welcoming, worshipping and inclusive Christian community which enables positive attitudes amongst pupils, who become confident learners and achieve well, especially in collective worship and RE.
- The strong sense of a family community, valued by everyone, underpinned by core Christian values.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that distinctive Christian character is a standing item on all governing body agendas.
- Embed the work of the school chaplain in working with pupils to design and use outdoor spaces for reflection as well as supporting pupils in their understanding of core Christian concepts.

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

Forest of Galtres Primary School sustains an excellently rich, diverse and exciting learning environment where pupils are proud to belong, feel valued and achieve well. This is because the school is 'dedicated to excellence' and 'strives to be a happy, caring community rooted in the Christian faith'. The school's chosen Christian values of love, hope, forgiveness and reconciliation and friendship are integral to this vision. Data shows that pupils achieve high results against national expectations, with some pupils making significant progress, within this inclusive and supportive environment. Rigour as well as challenge for gifted and talented pupils is applied whilst maintaining consistency in pupils' lives. The school takes a very positive approach to attendance, which is very good; and there have been no exclusions this year. This is because the school takes the approach of working with families and meeting the needs of individual children wherever they can. Behaviour is excellent and relationships are exemplary in this school where Christian values are lived out. For example, Christian values and creative prayer days led by the church community and The York Schools and Youth Trust [Yo Yo] enable everyone to focus on the Biblical stories, enhancing strong relationships. An excellent example is that of the story of Joseph, woven throughout the day with each class working on part of the story and linking it to the school's values in action through music, drama and art. Displays throughout the school focus on the school's core Christian values and themes such as a 'window in your soul' which nurture pupils' spiritual development. Pupils say they would welcome the opportunity to design and use reflective spaces in the school grounds. Parents comment on how their children 'all feel part of the whole school from day one' and praise the 'team work' they witness and the 'values of looking after one another'. Learning is aspirational here, not just academic, with a wide range of achievement valued, including music, which is a strength of this school. Pupils say they value their teachers and their friends. Pupils here feel able to make a positive contribution. They experience the Christian values of service and generosity through fundraising activities. Such activities also enhance their understanding of their place in the world and their responsibility to others. Children's global awareness is enhanced by links with schools in Kenya and Indonesia. Pupils show respect for the diverse community they belong to, enriched by visits to the local mosque and by welcoming visitors from the Islamic and Sikh faith communities into school. The children here enjoy their RE immensely, saying they 'study other religions to try and think about how they teach about creation, the prophets and why everything is'. In RE pupils are encouraged to ask philosophical and theological questions. They enjoy discussing the deep questions of faith and life with their school chaplain. Indeed, Class 6 pupils say RE is one of their favourite lessons as they 'discuss things more deeply and think about them, such as ideas on heaven'. They can articulate core Christian concepts, which are embraced by Methodists and Anglicans alike, such as covenant, saying, 'God takes care of people as long as they obey his laws and have faith in him'. However, they would benefit from support in understanding such concepts from the chaplain. They can relate John Wesley's Rule and encouragement to 'do all the good you can'. Pupils say, 'when you have faith, whatever happens it's going to be ok and The Lord will take care of you'. One pupil said, 'Hope is like a flicker of light in the darkest times'. Another pupil spoke highly of RE, saying 'This school promotes RE quite strongly and the lessons are well focussed and really enjoyable. We learn a lot whilst having fun'. To this end, the school achieved the RE Quality Mark [REQM] Gold in January 2013. As a result, proud pupils, the RE subject leader, and diocesan adviser attended the REQM launch in July 2013 at The House of Lords.

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

The attitude of pupils to collective worship is very good because the quality of worship offered to them is making a real difference in their lives, contributing greatly to their spiritual development. Pupil evaluation and their important feedback is well embedded within whole school evaluation of collective worship. Currently, older pupils take on the ownership of worship in the planning and leading of whole school worship. This has not yet been extended

to the younger children. Pupils and the RE subject leader work with the school chaplain, using a variety of models, but always with a focus on gathering, engaging, responding and sending. Pupils experience worship in their school and parish church and welcome worship outdoors too. They speak highly of worship they experience at York Minster, 'singing with The Minster choir' as well as at Ampleforth Abbey. Such activities enable them to experience being part of the wider communion of faith. Whilst the school chaplain's work is only in its infancy, the impact of his work with the young children and families he serves is already making a difference. Pupils say he 'reminds us when we can lead worship on our own' and the many opportunities there are to do so. Clergy are present in school every week, with the school chaplain leading worship every Wednesday and a lunchtime club every Thursday. Pupils are invited to put their questions to him in a box. Examples of such questions include 'Is Jesus real? Does God exist? Why should we believe in Jesus? and Do you like pizza?' Each question is valued with the same sincerity. Pupils articulate their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God as, 'Trinity is always about God, Jesus and The Holy Spirit. God created things and looks down upon us from heaven. Jesus showed us how to be kind, honest people and to love God. The Holy Spirit came down to earth and lived inside everyone to make them better people'. The use of the lectionary and the colours of the church year are important features of worship. The evaluation of worship shows real progression, involving adults and pupils together. Prayer has an important status in this school, with the school council writing their own prayer. Parents say they are impressed by prayer in the school and value the emphasis on Christian prayer in worship and singing Christian hymns. They say they enjoy attending worship when their children are taking part in, and leading worship in school or church. A highlight of the year is the Easter service in the parish church, with pupil contributions an important element. In all these ways, worship is constantly enriching pupils' lives and the lives of parents and staff and other members of this community.

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

This school's Christian foundation is effectively promoted by the vision and dedication of the RE subject leader, clergy, headteacher, staff and governors. It is also welcomed by parents so that the unique joint Anglican/Methodist foundation is celebrated and secured. The pursuit of excellence in all school activities is demonstrated by a highly successful drive to improve achievement and maintain high levels of attainment in all pupils. Collective worship and RE have an equally high status in school, not least because of the passion and commitment of the RE subject leader. Christian leadership, succession planning and roles and responsibilities are excellently supported through professional training and input from the diocese. The RE subject leader supports and challenges colleagues to continually raise standards. RE Big Books are regularly borrowed by the diocesan adviser to exemplify excellent practice. Pupil voice is viewed as 'powerful input' as it helps to focus on what's been achieved,' There is a link governor for RE and the governors are strongly committed to the effective action plan. This strategy shows the development of the school's distinctive Christian character through its chosen values, with a real focus on marking the dual Anglican and Methodist perspectives. The governors have rightly identified the need to ensure that the school's Christian ethos features as a standing item on every governing body agenda, which can include the chaplain's report, the RE subject leader's report and the pupils' evaluation of worship. Parents feel valued and welcome and included in their children's education and say they learn about Christianity and other faiths through their children. Thus everyone works together as a team at Forest of Galtres.

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