



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Staindrop VC Primary

Black Swan Wynd
Staindrop
Darlington
DL2 3NL

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Durham

Local authority: Darlington

Dates of inspection: 23rd June 2015

Date of last inspection: July 2010

School's unique reference number: 114226

Headteacher: Steven Whelerton

Inspector's name and number: Carole Snelling NS 519

School context

Staindrop Voluntary Controlled Primary is a smaller than average primary school in the semi-rural village of Staindrop. There are 179 pupils on roll. The school attracts 50% of its pupils from outside the catchment area. Attendance is above national average at 97%. There are significantly fewer than the national average of pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are entitled to pupil premium funding. Academic standards are significantly above the national average and the gap has closed between disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Staindrop Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Inspirational leadership by the head and the deputy headteacher driven by Christian love and the commitment of staff and governors to providing high quality education for every child leads to excellent achievement and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development (SMSC).
- The embedded Christian values and the living out of Staindrop's mission statement "to ensure that all grow to their full potential, where learning, laughter and friendship are at the heart of what the school does, rooted in Christian values" ensures that all flourish.
- The care and nurture given to each individual because they are unique and

special with God given gifts to be celebrated and developed; results in the excellent attainment and progress made by all pupils.

- The teaching of Jesus “to love God and love one another” is modelled by adults and pupils; consequently behaviour and relationships between all in the school community are excellent.

Areas to improve

- Commission training for staff delivering collective worship and increase the opportunities for children to shape and lead worship to further enhance the experience for pupils.

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

Staindrop is an outstanding and effective school with a distinctly Christian vision and ethos. It is a fully inclusive school where all are valued and nurtured as unique individuals made in the image of God. The distinctive Christian ethos is based on the teaching of Jesus “to love God and to love each other” as a result relationships between all in the school are excellent. In worship Fruit of the Spirit is explored and these explicit teachings contribute to embedding Christian values. Celebration of achievement, encouragement and praise are freely given, adding to each individual’s feeling of self worth and value. The attainment and progress made by all pupils is outstanding and exceeds the national average. Disadvantaged pupils have closed the learning gap with their peers because there have been rapid interventions to enhance progress. Great emphasis is placed on knowing each pupil’s strengths and encouraging them to be the best they can be, in their personal, social and academic development. Parents value the encouragement given to each child “to just be themselves”; all are welcome no matter what their need. Pupils enjoy school and are motivated to learn because they experience success. The religious education (RE) schemes of work provide excellent opportunities to develop SMSC by teaching about Christianity and other world religions. Barriers to understanding religious and cultural diversity are removed by a programme of links with Primary schools in London and the Gambia. Very good teaching in RE, arts projects, worship, visitors from various faiths and curriculum visits in Britain and abroad, add to pupils’ rich learning experience and SMSC development. British values of democracy, tolerance and respect are taught and so pupils are well prepared to take their place as citizens. Children are encouraged to be aspirational in their choice of their future careers. The Archbishop of York Young Leaders’ Programme is a vehicle for development of SMSC. Parents feel that the impact of the school’s Christian teaching about caring for and loving others is seen in “an extra sense of social awareness and understanding about how an individuals’ actions effect others” and “spiritual nurturing is something that helps your child to go out into the world and care for the community, life is not just about you” Pupils contribute to the development of their school and community through the School Council, Houses and the Young Leaders Programme. Pupils decide which charities to support, the books they will read on a daily basis to their peers, how worship should be developed and the support they will give to community projects. Pupils are proud of their school and say, “they feel safe, it’s fun, peaceful, friendly, and caring, they have time to think and reflect and it’s

legendary!"

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship plays a central and important role in the life of the school. Worship is daily; it takes the form of whole school, class, celebration and circle worship. It is distinctly Christian, inclusive of all faiths and meets the needs and experiences of children, school and the community. Worship is coordinated by the deputy headteacher and delivered by a variety of staff and visiting clergy. A very well thought out schedule of themes includes Fruit of the Spirit and the Christian values of peace, hope, love, forgiveness, wisdom and truth. The incorporation of major festivals and seasons in the Anglican year allows children to learn something of Anglican practice and of the Biblical stories and teachings behind the festivals. Pupils are familiar with religious symbolism; they know the response to the peace and the significance of sharing it. Worship is inspirational, the children enjoy the experience they say "worship makes me feel peaceful, special, joyful, loved, it makes me feel good about what I have done, it's to give thanks to God". Prayer, drama, role play, music, Bible texts, favourite hymns and reflection are key elements of worship. Prayer is an important aspect of daily life in the school. Pupils use quiet areas and a prayer tree for personal prayer; this contributes to their developing spirituality. Children have written class prayers which are used at the start and end of each day and in class and school worship. Evaluation of worship by the pupils and governors has allowed new approaches to be introduced including circle worship. This has been well received by pupils and it allows for deep questioning, reflection and SMSC development. Children observed in early years were fully engaged in thinking about how God made everyone special and different and the importance of including everyone, developing empathy and showing love for all. A child said "God has made us all different and we just have to be us" and "Be brave and be yourself" Pupils are involved in helping to deliver worship and they are keen to volunteer; they say they would like to be more involved in planning and leading whole school worship and opportunities to do this are underway. The themes from worship are often linked to RE lessons, including teaching about the person of Jesus and thinking about God as Father, Son and Spirit. Worship impacts on the school community; this is demonstrated in the children's fundraising for charities, their engagement in their community, the care and respect they show for each other and in talking about what they have thought about at home. During special occasions when worship is held at Saint Mary's church, children and families enjoy the services led by the clergy and the church is filled to capacity. The coordinator has identified the need for further professional development for those who lead worship.

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

The experienced headteacher, supported by his deputy and a fully committed staff share a very clear Christian vision for the school. Inspirational leadership by the head who is a local Leader of Education, the deputy headteacher and the dedication of staff and governors, leads to high quality education and excellent achievement. In achieving academic excellence the school has not lost sight of all the other aspects of children's development including their spirituality and moral development. There is an openness to new ideas and staff are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure the wellbeing and

success of the pupils. There are high expectations and aspirations for every child. Children and adults are afforded opportunities to develop their individual skills and talents in an atmosphere where each is valued and nurtured as a child made in the image of God. Older children play an important role in nurturing and caring for their younger peers. Parents attribute the calm, loving atmosphere and high standards of behaviour to the underpinning caring Christian ethos. The governors provide very good support and challenge and contribute to embedding the distinctive Christian ethos. They rigorously challenge and support leaders ensuring that there is a focus on continual improvement in standards, attainment and staff development to bring about improvement. RE plays a vital role in SMSC development. The deputy head is the RE leader. The subject is very well taught using a variety of imaginative approaches and consequently children love RE lessons, this has been made possible by the investment in high quality professional development for all who teach RE. The head has very good links with local church schools, the Diocese and other local schools. In terms of succession planning opportunities have been afforded for developing staff skills and talents and preparing them to undertake leadership roles in other church schools. As a local Leader in Education the head is using his expertise to support colleagues in schools in the area. Links with the local church and community are highly effective and productive. A number of pupils attend Messy Church run by the local Methodist church. Visits take place to Saint Mary's Church as part of RE, for worship at the Harvest, Easter and Christmas. The school is providing the link to the parish church and through the children is bringing families to worship and perhaps to faith.

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