



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Horbury Bridge Church of England Junior and Infant Academy

Bridge Street
Horbury Bridge
Wakefield
West Yorkshire WF4 5PS

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Wakefield

Dates of inspection: 13 March 2015

Date of last inspection as Horbury Bridge CofE (VC) Junior and Infant School: May 2010

School's unique reference number: 137967

Headteacher: Janette Skinner

Inspector's name and number: Nigel Castledine (652)

School context

Horbury Bridge CofE Academy is a smaller than average junior and infant school that converted to academy status in 2012. It is situated in extended buildings adjacent to the parish church, in a suburb of Wakefield. The academy is growing, currently having five classes. The large majority of children are of White British origin and are from families that are either Christian or of no particular faith. The proportion of children supported by Pupil Premium is well below average, as is the number having a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education and Health Care plan.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Horbury Bridge CofE Junior and Infant Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The vibrant faith ethos and clear Christian values of the academy permeate all aspects of school life and nurture the beneficial and cordial relationships between all members of the school community.
- The leadership and vision of the headteacher and governors empower the determination of all staff to provide the highest quality of education for every child.
- The impressively imaginative scope of children's concern for the needs of others world-wide, has resulted in a national award for the academy's thought-provoking support for Fairtrade.

Areas to improve

- Extend the academy's ongoing world-wide educational links to enhance the children's understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith.
- Include a reflection and prayer focus area that supports the spirituality of the children as part of the redevelopment of the outdoor provision at the academy.

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

Horbury Bridge is a family-oriented academy that lives by its pervading Christian values, which create a richly stimulating and warm Christian ethos. This underpins the high quality of teaching and nurtures the children's learning experiences. Carefully matched to the children's needs, the curriculum engages the children both as enthusiastic learners and independent thinkers. Christian values also support the development of the children's strong social and emotional learning, their self-esteem and their confidence in their dealings with others. Academy data, verified by Data Dashboard, shows that children achieve broadly average trends by the end of Key Stage 1 which rise to above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Because children enjoy their school life, attendance data shows that the academy meets national expectations. The children speak of the satisfaction of their learning and their delight in working hard, succeeding and achieving. Responding to a development point from the last religious inspection, the academy has developed the way in which the school explicitly clarifies and celebrates its Christian character. This has been achieved through the careful selection and development of the school's chosen Christian values: Community, Peace, Thankfulness, Humility, Perseverance, Justice, Friendship, Trust, Forgiveness /Compassion, Hope, Respect for God's World, and Courage. These Christian values are respected by all stakeholders and they influence all aspects of academy life. The exceptional quality of relationships between all members of the academy community, rooted in Christian teaching, is mutually supportive and encourages the children's good behaviour. Children of all ages are keen to make their appropriate personal contributions to academy life. Being classroom helpers, librarians, playground or dining room aides are all tasks willingly carried out. Collective contributions towards supporting the academy community include membership of sports teams, dance groups, music-making activities, and entertainment at events for the older members of the community. The resulting broad and enriched academy life empowers learning to go beyond the school's boundaries to include national and international aspects coupled with a mature consideration of faith and belief. This is typified by the school's charitable outreach in its innovative promotion of the Fairtrade brand and its underpinning Christian concepts. Charitable support is also given to local charities and major UK fund-raising events such as the annual Children in Need appeal. International links enable the children to grow as global citizens, and include contact with Finland, and support for the Diocesan link with the Diocese of Mara, Tanzania. The academy is also developing an educational link with a Tanzanian primary school in Mmazami. However, these links do not feed into RE learning to strengthen the children's understanding of Christianity as a world faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Because worship is based around the academy's chosen Christian values, it strengthens the understanding of living by gospel teachings. Worship is carefully co-ordinated and planned by the headteacher to ensure differing beliefs, points of view and developmental stages are respected and other world faiths and cultures are valued. Regular evaluations show that worship is inclusive and has meaning and resonance for those of faith as well as those of none. Worship in school is varied and includes much participation by children. This is particularly evident in the 'whoosh' approach where children change in and out of acting roles in an exciting way that brings an accessible dramatic approach to the retelling of Bible and other faith teachings. Worship is also led by school staff and the very supportive local clergy as well as visiting leaders such as Hand to Mouth puppets. Anglican tradition is seen in the artefacts used as part of worship, and in the use of traditional prayers such as the Lord's Prayer. The cycle of the Christian year is included within the academy's worship themes, which also include the Christian understanding of the Holy Trinity. The changing church seasons are accentuated by the use of appropriate liturgical colours in displays and the worship table cloth. The Bible is highlighted as the source of Christian teachings and reference is also made to the sacred texts of other faiths. Hymns and songs that reflect Christian tradition are sung to great effect with the 'whoosh' approach again being used to encourage children of all ages to enjoy leading the

singing. Prayer, silence and reflection are integral to school worship and each class has a Grace that is used before lunch. Both children and adults at the academy are at ease with prayer and use it as a spontaneous response to feelings and events. An example of this is the blessing given to the school's chickens when they laid their first eggs. Engaging and creative reflection areas in every classroom provide for personal expression and thought. In contrast, the current outdoor environment reflective area is inflexible in its placement close to noisy play pursuits. The children and their families have regular opportunities to take part in worship at the local parish church, particularly at the major festivals of the Christian year. The popular after-school 'Messy Church', jointly led by church and school, provides open opportunities for family worship in an accessible and informal way. The children's leading of worship for the whole community on Remembrance Day takes the faith and worship of the academy out into the locality.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious Education (RE) enriches the Christian ethos of the school because it enables the children to develop their own informed viewpoints about personal faith through exploration of their own beliefs and values. RE also strongly supports and enhances the Christian values of the school by ensuring that children understand the biblical teachings on which they are based. Accordingly, it is considered to be a core subject. Teaching standards in the subject are consistently good with outstanding aspects and pupils' responses to their RE learning are very positive. There is a suitable balance between 'learning about' and 'learning from' a range of world religions. RE coverage also supports comparisons between the Christian values of the academy and those of other world faiths. Pupil achievement in RE is comparable to other core subjects. The academy strives to ensure that children are enabled to think deeply and respond sensitively in their learning in RE. The children's responses to learning are cross-curricular and include in addition to writing, dance, drama, iPad video recording, art and music. Practical activities are also used such as the unity of three parts of the Holy Trinity being clarified by the children baking plaited bread with three distinct key flavourings representing God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Subject content is carefully planned and evaluated by the exceptional RE co-ordinator. She also carries out regular lesson observations and work scrutiny to ensure high standards are maintained. A recent innovation has been the introduction of individual class RE albums in which the on-going learning is creatively entered to become a unique record of the breadth and depth of coverage. RE learning gives children the opportunity to engage in the big questions of life. Links between the academy's Christian Values and RE bring about the facility for children to both ask and answer 'big' questions such as "Why does God forgive us?" from a Year 1 child.

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

Led by the outstanding headteacher and senior staff, the academy nurtures and enhances its Christian ethos to ensure the consistently high quality of the learning provision at the academy. Rigorous self-review by all school staff and the effective scrutiny, support and commitment of the governing body ensures the academy's Christian ethos remains at the heart of the continuous cycle of school development. Ongoing professional development is available for all staff and governors, enabling all to feel valued and to achieve their potential. The headteacher as a Local Leader of Education and the head of teaching and learning as a Specialist Leader of Education both regularly support and work with other schools. The head is also a member of the diocesan succession planning working group. Effective parental involvement is enhanced by the positive use of social media to keep all well informed. A mutually-beneficial relationship exists between the academy and the life of the local church. Shared events, support for community activities and fund-raising, as well as worshipping together all create positive relationships with the wider community. The school meets statutory requirements for both RE and collective worship.