CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

The Methodist Church

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Central Walker Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lancefield Avenue, Walker

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE6 2NP

Previous SIAMS grade: Not previously inspected

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Newcastle upon Tyne

Dates of inspection: 5 June 2015

Date of last inspection: N/A

School's unique reference number: 136741

Headteacher: Barbara Redhead

Inspector's name and number: Nicholas Chamberlain NS508

School context

Central Walker is a larger than average primary school which opened in 2012, following the merger of two primary schools, one of which had a Christian foundation. The proportion of pupils supported through school action, at school action plus or with an education health care plan is higher than average and the proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is much higher than average. The school is part of the Riverside Trust. It serves the communities of Walker and Byker. The school is led by an Executive Headteacher. Since inception there has been considerable turnover of staff, including at senior level. This is the school's first SIAMS inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Central Walker Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- A rapidly established, vibrant Christian ethos underpins learning and personal development and has been instrumental in creating a school community in which all children and adults are loved, helped to flourish and treated with respect.
- Collective worship provides outstanding opportunity for celebration and expression and is leading to rapid spiritual development.
- Quietly inspirational leadership by the headteacher and her colleagues is driving levels of achievement and transforming learners' expectations and prospects.

Area to improve

- Provide more opportunities for children to lead worship more frequently, thus matching their expressed aspiration to contribute to the life of the school in this way.

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

In just three years the school has established an outstanding Christian ethos because it planned for this from the very beginning. All policies are shaped with the core values at their heart. Policies are regularly reviewed as are the values themselves and following recent review some were re-emphasised and others introduced. This means that the values chosen really do have an impact on behaviour, relationships and expectations in the school. For example, emphasis on love and friendship and peace and reconciliation underpins the school's approach to behaviour. The primary vision is positive, with the key belief being that every child should enjoy happiness; a vision based in a commitment to Christian love. However, should inappropriate behaviour need to be challenged this is done swiftly and fairly, in accordance with Christian principles of reconciliation and peace. The behaviour, the attitude to behaviour and the children's general demeanour is outstanding. Another key reason for this is the fact that every child matters, every child is known in depth by the whole staff, and every child benefits from skilled, loving, weekly review. The school's investment in professional support staff, the team work amongst all staff and the role models provided by staff are all outstanding. The theological vision which underpins this ethos is that all people are created in God's image and therefore that all people should be understood, valued, and given an equal opportunity to succeed in life. The school's religious education provides many opportunities for children to develop their expressive skills. It also ably supports the school's commitment to promoting understanding of diversity and of other faiths. Attainment and levels of knowledge in religious education are at least good. An outstanding commitment to extra-curricular clubs and activities and to links with communities elsewhere in England and in Botswana is valued by the children and is also contributing strongly to their spiritual, social, cultural and moral development. Spiritual articulacy is being strongly encouraged and while levels of confidence in this respect may as yet be lower than in some other schools the ability and confidence of children and adults in this sphere is increasing rapidly. In a social context that is characterised by lack of resource and lack of opportunity, Central Walker models and exemplifies Christian generosity and abundance.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school has certainly not yet achieved all that it wishes in collective worship. It is planning to increase levels of participation in the leadership and delivery of collective worship, especially by learners, and it has established clear structures and processes in order to achieve this, which is something that the children want. For example, the current cohort of worship leaders is looking forward to soon training their successors, thus cascading confidence and capacity through the school. Given the fact that just three years ago the school combined one pupil body that was drawn from a Christian foundation school and one that was drawn from a maintained school into a new whole, engagement with and attitudes towards collective worship are outstanding, as are its content and delivery. Learners and adults alike enjoy and value collective worship. The worship offers clear opportunity for expression and reflection and vital opportunity for the celebration of achievement and identity. Consistent planning, regular review, clear and collegial oversight by leaders and governors, and an understanding of worship as being a normal activity that is part of our entitlement as human beings all underpin the school's success in this aspect of its life. A wide range of leaders, including representatives of different denominations, ensure that worship is diverse and stimulating. Regular involvement by certain key practitioners, such as the local parish clergy, allow relationships to be built and sustained. The varied leadership and variety of settings used means that learners healthily experience worship as both 'special' and celebratory and also 'normal' and part of who we are. Clear links with the school's values together with the use of regular liturgical phrases allow participants in worship to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ and to explore and participate in the life of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Formal worship is linked in terms of themes to relevant and stimulating displays throughout the school, helping to promote personal spiritual growth. The planned reflection area at the heart of the school will

offer a welcoming venue for worship and reflection that will helpfully complement the more formal setting of the school hall, allowing the school's provision to be further wisely extended. When talking about worship in the school one child commented that 'people enjoy worship, because it is time to think'. Another said that while she had been originally 'unsure' about coming to a church school it was 'different from what everyone thought' and that now she and her friends think 'all people in school have the Holy Spirit in them' – a change that can be attributed to her participation in the worship team.

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

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school can best be seen in the way that they have quickly created a unified body out of two original constituent parts. This achievement has not been without challenge. The physical building of the school has had to be adapted as the school community has taken root in it, so that it matches its needs. Similarly, the staff has had to be melded into a cohesive team, drawing on each of the former schools' establishments while also discerning and employing new colleagues. This has required sensitive and strategic leadership from the governing body, from partner agencies and from the school's own senior management. The wise and calm leadership of the executive headteacher, especially demonstrated in her ability to build teams, to challenge where necessary and to inspire confidence, has transformed the school. Her ability quickly to establish competent senior leadership and phase leadership teams, and to draw teaching and other professional staff into a cohesive whole, is humbly inspirational. All adults model the school's values but the head teacher absolutely embodies the school's undemonstrative commitment to human flourishing. Standards of achievement are improving rapidly and are in line (or above) national expectations. A highly successful balance has been achieved between experience and youthful enthusiasm, intuition and rigorous evaluation of data, the willingness to take risks and the recognition of the value of focussed hard work. This has not only resulted in the establishment of a rapidly outstanding Christian school but has laid the groundwork for future leadership both within Walker and across church schools. This is a school in which people are happy, safe and enjoying learning and teaching. Partnerships with the local church are strong, creative, and not just held by clergy or professionals. Arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements. In a school that is characterised by the genuinely Christian virtues of service and humility, explicit Christian vision is naturally expressed undemonstratively. However, the impact of the school's pervasive Christian vision is clear in both the quality of its achievements already and its commitment to ensuring that all its children (and adults), whatever their personal circumstances, should have the same access to opportunity as any other child in the country.

SIAMS report [June 2015] [Central Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne] [NE6 2NP]