



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Swainby and Potto Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Calver Close  
Swainby  
Northallerton  
DL6 3DH

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: York**

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Date of inspection: 25 March 2015

Date of last inspection: April 2010

School's unique reference number: 121617

Headteacher: David Sims

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter 244

#### School context

Swainby and Potto Primary School is a small, rural primary school on the western edge of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. The majority of its 35 pupils are from a White British background. A few children are eligible for free school meals and/or have looked after status. Swainby is confederated with Osmotherley Community Primary School and a process to federate with another Voluntary Aided Primary School is close to completion. The headteacher has been in post for two years.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Swainby and Potto as a Church of England school are good

- Integral to the journey that this school is on is the vision of the headteacher, embraced by governors and staff. This ensures the Christian character permeates all school life.
- Each child is treated as a valued individual in this welcoming and worshipping community. This enables pupils to become confident learners who enjoy learning and achieve well.
- The strong sense of a nurturing and inclusive 'small school, big family' community, underpinned by core Christian values, ensures everyone feels loved and accepted.

#### Areas to improve

- Deepen pupils' understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.[SMSC]
- Enhance the evaluation of collective worship, involving pupils and governors to enable worship to continually reflect quality and integrity.
- Ensure this school's distinctive Christian character is preserved by enabling continued support from clergy members in this transition period of federation.

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

This small, rural primary school holds the Christian values of hope, wisdom, peace, justice, friendship and trust at the heart of everything it does. It provides a very positive learning environment, where pupils are proud to belong and find their way forward in life. This is because the school is an inclusive, happy and family community, rooted in the Christian faith and the schools' Anglican heritage. More importantly, the whole school community understands the importance of, and lives out, its chosen core Christian values. Good examples include the school's inclusion and behaviour policy and practice which has forgiveness, justice and hope enshrined within it. As a result, attendance is good and there have been no exclusions. The school takes two distinct approaches to pupil achievement. Firstly, they ensure all children reach their potential, expecting the best for them no matter what their social needs might be. Secondly, the progress of each individual child is carefully monitored and tracked. At half-termly pupil progress meetings staff discuss how well intervention strategies have worked and note any improvements in pupils' self-confidence or their ability to reflect and empathise with others. This shows the importance of holistic SMSC development, with the focus firmly on spiritual development. Information shared then informs teachers' future planning and how the learning can be shaped for each child. This is especially important in such a small school where one of the challenges is teaching the whole of Key Stage 2 in the same room. Progress over time is good, given the children's starting points. Religious education [RE] is tracked with the same rigour as other core subjects. Moreover, all achievement is celebrated in a culture where all learning is acknowledged, and where a variety of extra-curricular activities develop a range of skills. These include gardening club and sports clubs, which enable children to socialise together after school. Pupils feel able to make a positive contribution to school life and experience the Christian values of service and generosity through their fundraising activities, such as Operation Christmas Child. Such values enhance their understanding of their place in the world and their responsibility to others. Pupils show respect for the diverse community they belong to. Their understanding is enriched by visits to places of worship, which includes their own parish church, Holy Cross. Using the parish church as a resource in this way is very much seen as an integral extension to this aided primary school. In addition, the residential trips to Robin Wood enable older pupils to meet new challenges and grow in their self-esteem.

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

Worship involves and engages pupils and is making a real difference in their lives and in the lives of their parents. This is because worship is recognised as an important part of the school day and follows the Christian church year. Adults, including parents, value collective worship, especially the close links with the parish church and the 'memorable services' which they are able to attend. Pupils find the church conducive to worship, saying it is peaceful. They also value their vicar who is a welcome visitor to school. They experience key festivals in church, such as Easter as well as taking part in services to explore the meaning of marriage and services of Holy Communion. Consequently, pupils understand the symbolism of the Last Supper, saying they 'just have the [blessed] bread, the body of Jesus', knowing the wine represents the blood of Jesus. They cite, 'on the night before he died' as one of their favourite songs, recalling this key event of Holy Week. Pupils say they 'really like listening to the stories in the Bible, citing Moses as a good and just leader. Prayer is an important part of the worshipping life of this school. Pupils value prayer, sometimes using pebbles to help them in their newly created Thoughtful Corners. They enjoy 'praying outside, feeling the grass and feeling closer to God and Jesus, remembering God created all this wonderful nature'. Pupils use the collective worship reflection area as a sacred space and as a resource. Year 6 pupils lead whole school worship every week, usually based on a key value, such as justice. They speak of their understanding of God as father, Son and Holy Spirit as 'Jesus died on the cross to get rid of everyone's sin. Easter is when Jesus comes back to life. People say The Holy Spirit is God sending messages'. This school started the diary room approach and has delivered training for the Swaledale Alliance using this resource.

Consequently, podcasts are used as a truer reflection of worship. This includes interviews with governors and a photo bank which is archived. However, foundation governors and pupils acknowledge a need to share their viewpoints more regularly.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Pupils clearly enjoy their RE lessons in this school where RE is important, teaching is consistently good and standards are in line with other core subjects. RE is led and managed by a senior teacher who has passion for the subject, with the support of the headteacher. He knows the direction he envisages for this subject to follow and has an overview of RE through lesson observations and scrutiny of books. Good tracking of pupils' progress and assessment is in place, showing how the school's distinctive Christian character is integral to the process and informs future planning. RE work is celebrated in RE Big Books. Pupils are aware of their targets and know how to improve in their work. They aim to be 'good in RE as well as literacy'. They say they like asking important questions, such as, 'Is Jesus a hero?' and 'How long is eternity?' They can relate the Christian story, explaining key concepts such as incarnation and salvation in their own words. Even the youngest pupils are encouraged to think deeply about the significance of Easter symbols, supporting their SMSC development. Pupils go on to say they enjoy learning about different religions. Good examples include learning about the Muslim way of life and reflecting on inspirational people, such as Malala. However, pupils say they would like to visit more places of worship.

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

This school's shared vision is one of strength through collaboration. In order for this rural primary school to be sustainable, Swainby and Potto Primary firmly believes that it is important to share expertise and take advantage of the skills and talents in the local community and neighbouring schools. To this end, there is a longstanding link with a school in Middlesbrough and an emerging one with a large primary in Stockton. The headteacher's committed leadership, vision and dedication is strongly supported by governors and staff. This has ensured that all areas for development from the last inspection have been fully addressed. Through the school's Distinctiveness Committee, the foundation governors have an on-going process of action and reflection in the unique context of their partnership with a community school. Good examples include the separate distinctive Christian character, worship and RE development plan which identifies distinctive aspects, enabling governors to track progress in these key areas. Worship and RE consequently meet the statutory requirements, and are well led, managed and resourced. Recent improvements include the creation of a collective worship sacred space area and developing the responsibility of the pupil led committee. The RE long term plan enables pupils to engage with Anglican principles and practices and the RE subject leader values diocesan network meetings. Staff in this small, rural primary take on many roles and responsibilities and benefit from the training and support offered to them by the diocese. Parents praise the fact that their children's needs are well met and how the wellbeing of pupils is given the highest priority. They go on to say how much their children have grown in their learning and personal development since they have been at school. They speak highly of how all the children are very forgiving and how the children, staff and parents all work together. They continue, 'everyone is involved here. It is welcoming and inclusive and all are completely accepted'. There is a real sense of belonging, identity and involvement with church, school and village communities working closely together. Very good examples include the children and parents helping to serve the Lent lunches in the village hall as well as the well-attended monthly coffee mornings held in school. Taking part in Remembrance Day commemorations as well as other activities help these pupils to think about what it means to be a light in the community. In addition, the schools in the federation share a Pentecost picnic, Education Sunday and Rogation Sunday together. However, the school values support from local clergy to ensure its own distinctive Christian character is preserved along the journey to federation.