



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### St Margaret's CE (VC) Junior School

Knutton Road

Wolstanton

Newcastle-under-Lyme,

ST5 0HU

**Previous SIAS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Lichfield**

Local authority: Staffordshire

Date of inspection: 27 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 27 June 2011

School's unique reference number: 124268

Headteacher: David Hugill

Inspector's name and number: Mark Cooper 425

#### School context

St Margaret's school is situated in the suburbs between Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme. It is split between two sites and is within walking distance to St Margaret's Church. The school has 250 pupils the large majority being of White British heritage. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and a new incumbent is in post at St Margaret's Church.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Margaret's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong leadership and vision of the headteacher and chair of governors.
- The proclamation of Christian values across the school and the positive impact they have on inspiring pupils' learning so that they achieve well.
- The outstanding behaviour of pupils and the relationships they have with each other and their teachers.
- The strong focus on helping others as exemplified through 'rota kids' who lead on key charity events such as Mary's backpacks.

#### Areas to improve

- Continue to develop the evaluative procedures that monitor the impact of the school's distinctiveness as a Church of England school.
- Continue to provide quality professional development opportunities to enhance the school's Christian distinctiveness.

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

St Margaret's school truly lives out its motto, "everyone is valued, everyone is motivated, everyone achieves." This is seen clearly in the pupil's positive relationships with each other and their teachers, as one pupil said, "everyone knows each other, we work as a team, and it's like my second family". One pupil from a different faith said the school allowed her, "to be what I want to be, nothing holds me back." The school clearly cares for all fulfilling its Christian value of equality. Behaviour, which is underpinned by the Christian values, is exemplary. This results in a calm and purposeful atmosphere across the school which has a positive impact on pupils learning. Pupils' attainment is well above local and national averages and they make good progress. Parents recognise that the Christian values are instrumental with one saying that the school helped her child, "to meet their full potential." A newly appointed behaviour leader has raised the profile of positive behaviour amongst pupils and the way it is connected to Christian values. Pupils comment that there are hardly any incidents of bullying and any arguments are quickly resolved. Pupils have a caring attitude towards one another and are concerned for each other's welfare. They emphasise the importance of equality and that all should be treated the same irrespective of who they are. Pupils connect this to the story of Jesus washing his disciple's feet. Clearly the Christian values, the life and teaching of Jesus and the positive behaviour strategy are having a profound effect on pupils and they recognise that these are deeply rooted in the daily life of the school. Pupils talk about the Christian values with insightful clarity and can easily make connections between them and the life and teachings of Jesus. One pupil talked about the importance of forgiveness and how Jesus set the example by forgiving those who put him on the cross, while another talked about the importance of compassion and Jesus' kindness in healing those who were sick. The teaching of RE (religious education), PSHE (personal, social, and health education), SMSC (spiritual, moral, social, cultural) and worship all work cohesively together to ensure that the Christian values are tangible to all pupils across the school. The school's charity work locally, nationally and internationally and its involvement in the local community is a key strength. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their involvement in 'rota kids' and how this is giving them opportunities to help those in need. Pupils often take the initiative in fund raising for those who are less fortunate than themselves. Parents choose the school because of its nurturing and encouraging ethos which, as they identify stems from its Christian foundations, one parent saying that their child "loved St Margaret's because they felt loved here."

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

Collective worship is carefully planned by both the RE / worship coordinator and headteacher. They have a holistic approach in which worship themes are closely linked to the school's Christian values, British values, RE and PSHE. This deepens pupil's understanding and appreciation of them in their own lives. For example, pupils talked about the importance of compassion, tolerance and equality in school and society. Worship has a central place in the life of the school and is clearly influenced by the Anglican liturgy, although there are times when it also draws inspiration from the Methodist tradition. Pupils enjoy and value worship which they believe gives them the space to be quiet and reflect, "it helps me think about what is going on in the world" and, "it helps me to be calm and open up to God about everything." Both pupils and staff enthusiastically take part and lead aspects of collective worship through the lighting of candles, prayer and singing. Pupils feel that worship helps them to be, "united as a school." They particularly enjoy class worship which affords them the opportunity to create and lead worship in a smaller more intimate setting. They felt class worship was a safe place and time to share their own feelings and make up their own prayers. This helps pupils to develop their own spiritual awareness. Worship clearly develops and deepens pupils understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus, which is impressive. They make connections with the schools values and Jesus's example, one pupil making the connection between Jesus washing his disciple's feet with

the value of equality. Their understanding of the Trinity is equally as impressive with one pupil commenting that they felt that the Holy Spirit *“is inside us and always there.”* Key Christian festivals are celebrated at St. Margaret’s church and pupils enthusiastically take an active part in them. The new incumbent of St Margaret’s is popular amongst pupils who value his presence around school and in leading worship. There is a designated area in school for quiet reflection which pupils have valued particularly in times of bereavement. Parents believe that worship helps their child to understand the difference between right and wrong and respect others, as one pupil put it, *“we respect each other, we are all equal.”*

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

Although the headteacher is new to the school, he has made an impressive impact in a relatively short space of time. He works closely with the chair of governors and the newly appointed incumbent of St Margaret’s Church. Collectively they have a shared vision that will continue to strengthen and deepen the Christian foundations of the school. Governors are actively involved with the school and are very supportive of the headteacher. All are committed to ensure that the school offers the very best to its pupils. This is driven by the Christian values, the positive behaviour strategy and the desire that pupils achieve to their God given potential. Parents speak highly of the leadership and teachers who they find approachable and caring. They believe the school has a staff that is strong and committed and who work cohesively as a team. This has a positive impact on their children who feel safe, secure, listened to and valued. Both the leaders of RE / worship and behaviour have a positive impact on pupils, particularly in their understanding of the Christian values and how they can be put into practice both in and outside of school. Pupils talk very proudly about their school. They believe they *“learn a lot”*, and that *“learning is fun.”* In particular they talk fondly about their teachers who they feel, *“respect them”*, are, *“trustworthy and reliable”*, but most importantly, *“keep them safe and protected.”* They clearly understand that their school is a church school which makes it special. The headteacher has benefited and valued support and advice from the diocese. This has focused on how the school’s distinctive Christian character can be further enhanced. This now needs to be cascaded to governors and teaching staff through CPD (continued professional development) so all can benefit. Some evaluation of the school as a Church of England school has taken place, but this now needs further formal development by the whole school community.

SIAMS report 27th June 2016, St Margaret’s CE (VC) Junior School, Wolstanton, ST5 0HU