



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Skirlaugh Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Dorset Avenue  
Skirlaugh  
Hull  
HU11 5EB

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** York

Local authority: East Riding of Yorkshire

Date of inspection: 25 February 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 117993

Headteacher: Janet Forth

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter 244

#### School context

Skirlaugh Primary School is a small, rural school which works closely with neighbouring Riston Church of England Primary School in the same benefice. There are very strong links with the ecumenical St Augustine's Anglican/Methodist Church. Almost all of the 147 pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is higher than the national average. There have been significant staffing changes in the last three years.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Skirlaugh as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The unswerving dedication and Christian commitment of the headteacher, with the support of staff and governors, ensures this school's Christian character is rooted in core Christian values and permeates all school life.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning and achieve well because they know they are cherished for who they are within a caring, supportive Christian ethos.
- Skirlaugh Primary is a strong Christian family community where the hand of friendship is extended to everyone.

#### Areas to improve

- Deepen pupils' understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith and enable them to meet people of other faiths to enrich their learning and support their spiritual and cultural development.
- Ensure the monitoring of religious education [RE] is embedded as an important and integral aspect of this school's distinctive Christian character.

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

Skirlaugh Primary School provides an inspiring learning environment and successfully provides 'a caring Christian community where everyone matters'. This is because this school extends the hand of friendship to everyone as a natural part of its strong Christian ethos. Mutual trust and compassion shown to parents, as well as working closely with them in supportive ways, ensures very good relationships. In addition, this school is very proud of being a welcoming school, modelling forgiveness and justice. Staff successfully include and nurture pupils, following Jesus' teaching in the Bible to love God and your neighbour. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school, are proud to belong, recognising the 'bond of friendship and the values which help us to live our lives'. This impacts positively on their achievement and attendance. All groups of children, including those who are vulnerable, make good progress. Moderated work with Ebor Academy Trust and Filey Infants has helped to facilitate good assessment practice and engaging and active learning. Pupils are very forgiving of each other in an environment where mistakes are celebrated in a spirit of moving forwards. The school's core Christian values of forgiveness, friendship, perseverance and responsibility were chosen by the children. These were then shared with staff, governors and parents and published in the parish newsletter. Music and sport are strengths of the school. Pupils are able to learn the guitar from Year 3 upwards whilst the school sports teams are successful when competing in tournaments with other local schools. Pupils show respect for different beliefs and cultures through RE and worship. They say, 'it's ok to be different and this school is welcoming and you don't feel left out'. This makes a good contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy their RE and can relate the Christian narrative well. However, they are less secure in their knowledge of Ascension. They ask important questions, such as 'How do Muslims pray?' as well as enjoying creating scenes from the Bible. For example, when studying the resurrection appearances, they ponder Jesus asking Peter, 'Do you love me as a worshipper?' They enjoyed a very successful RE day with Long Riston Primary School with a focus on Pentecost. Pupils said they shared their learning about 'the flames above the disciples' heads when they believed in the Holy Spirit, God and Jesus all at once'. Year 3 and 4 pupils always begin their RE lessons with a reflection on 'God be in my head'. Pupils' fundraising helps them to 'think about Jesus in other countries'. However, the school acknowledges that deepening pupils' understanding of the worldwide Christian Church is an area for development. This includes awareness of how Anglicans worship in different countries to enrich their understanding of the worldwide Anglican family. The school has also correctly identified that pupils' experiences of diversity of faith would be further enriched by meeting more people of faith and visiting their places of worship.

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

Inspiring and engaging worship is experienced by the whole Skirlaugh school community. One of the strengths of worship at Skirlaugh is the fact that clergy from St Augustine's Church lead weekly worship in school. The gathering, engaging, responding and sending structure to daily worship successfully engages pupils in planning and leading worship, based on the Christian value for each half term, such as courage. Moreover, the Church Development Group involves Skirlaugh pupils as well as pupils from Riston Primary and clergy from St Augustine's Church in planning and evaluating worship. Pupils say they enjoying readings from the Bible in worship as it 'tells you about Jesus and what he did as a peacemaker and tells you how to make peace. If you want peace, work for justice'. They also say they draw strength from the words they sing in worship. Interactive prayer and reflection areas are used very well and are integral to the worshipping life of this school. Key festivals are celebrated in church. Pupils have also enjoyed exploring the meaning of the sacraments of baptism and holy communion and can explain the symbolism of The Last Supper. Parents say their children's understanding of God is very good because of the involvement of the clergy in the community and note that they 'think the world' of the vicar. Pupils say the clergy are 'good role models, showing leadership in worship and services. They talk about Jesus and what he did'. They say the teaching they receive 'helps me to grow up and be more mature'. Parents enjoy the church services too. They go on to say their

children sing hymns at home, asking if their parents know the words and enquire if God is all around us. Parents say that Friday worship, which they also attend, enables the whole community to celebrate and share achievements together'. Pupils proudly use the Lord's Prayer books and Bibles given to Foundation Stage 2 pupils and to Year 2 pupils respectively. Pupils have visited York Minster. They acknowledge the history and Anglican foundation of their school saying, 'Mr Skirlaugh paid for the stained glass window in York Minster and when we look up, we see our badge'. Pupils also note, 'The Archbishop of York came to Long Riston and Skirlaugh a couple of weeks ago' on his pilgrimage. Pupils say they learn about Augustine of Hippo, after whom their church is dedicated, through studying Saints and Heroes in RE. They welcome learning more about him in worship. Pupils are growing in their understanding of the Trinity. They speak of 'God who acts justly, Jesus who loves mercy and the Holy Spirit who helps us walk humbly with our God'.

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

The headteacher and governors have an unswerving Christian commitment and dedication to the whole school community. Governors regularly focus on the distinctive Christian character of their church school in governing body meetings. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed and there are clear priorities identified, going forward. The wellbeing of pupils is a priority and their voice is valued. The wellbeing of staff is equally well supported and governors ensure they receive relevant training for the roles and responsibilities they hold. The school makes excellent use of the support provided by the Diocese. Moreover, Skirlaugh Primary is very proud that photos showing examples of Christian distinctiveness are displayed in the new diocesan guidance documents. Clergy are welcome and regular visitors to school. Stable staffing now provides excellent role models. This includes the subject leadership of RE. Hence RE and worship meet the statutory requirements. However, the school correctly identifies that embedding the monitoring of RE as an important aspect of Christian distinctiveness is an area for development. Parents are full of praise in saying how this school embodies 'being kind and listening to others and making everyone feel accepted, helping those who struggle'. They speak highly of the closeness of this family community, where 'really good friendships enable children to develop their learning and interaction skills'. Parents can articulate what the Christian values mean to them. They say their children model the school's Christian values at home, citing how they take on responsibility for themselves and others. They also show justice and 'know right from wrong in Christian teaching and how to deal with situations'. Consequently, pupils thrive and achieve well. Community links are very strong. Good examples include young pupils making and then laying a wreath at the church memorial on Armistice Day. In addition, pupils sing for the elderly and Little Hippos, the pre-school group, meets at the church dedicated to St Augustine of Hippo. Skirlaugh pupils also benefit from RE days, such as the shared Pentecost Day with Riston as well as REaction Days, working with other local schools at Beverley Minster. Thus, everyone works together exceedingly well to ensure the school's Christian distinctiveness is celebrated and preserved.

SIAMS report February 2016 Skirlaugh Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Skirlaugh, Hull HU11 5EB