



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

### **Porter Croft Church of England Primary Academy**

Pomona Street  
Sheffield  
South Yorkshire  
S11 8JN

**Diocese: Sheffield**

Local authority: Sheffield

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014

Date of last inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> December 2009

School's unique reference number: 139986

Headteacher: Jim Dugmore

Inspector's name and number: Alastair Wood 575

### **School context**

Porter Croft Primary Academy is a smaller than average school of 206 pupils taught in year groups. It draws its pupils mainly from the immediate area, 70% are BME with over twenty languages spoken at any one time. 60% of the school's pupils are eligible for free school meals and pupil mobility is 22% above the national average. The school converted to an Academy in 2013.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Porter Croft as a Church of England school are outstanding**

This is a vibrant and exciting school closely focused on Christian values which are embedded in all aspects of its daily life. High expectations for its pupils' achievements and their successes complements their individual spiritual journeys. This is a unique school whose mission lies at the very heart of the community it serves. The school's mission statement encapsulates its approach to inclusion: 'Together we are Porter Croft.'

### **Established strengths**

- The school's unique Christian character
- The genuinely inclusive nature of the school and the strength of relationships
- The quality of links and support from the local community

### **Focus for development**

- Give pupils the opportunity to plan, deliver and evaluate collective worship
- Pupils are not aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith
- Increase pupils' understanding of the Holy Trinity

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

Porter Croft has a unique Christian character and ethos demonstrated through the school's vision and its inclusive nature. This is immediately apparent to all who visit the school and it impacts on each and every pupil's learning. The school's values are celebrated amongst a colourful display in the entrance. This shows the Christian season, the symbols of the cross in a variety of colours, a large decorated candle and a child-centred mural of the school playground proclaiming, 'Hosanna' to inspire and communicate the school's philosophy to parents and pupils alike. Strong relationships are at the very heart of the school's daily life; it promotes its key value of Koinonia in a truly Christian spirit and as a result pupils are nurtured and thrive to be as the mission statement says: 'Together we are Porter Croft.' The school's values are carried forward throughout the school through displays in each classroom and the hall enabling pupils to understand their importance and feel happy and secure. The school's Christian distinctiveness is clearly demonstrated on Year 2's classroom forgiveness tree where one short prayer reads: 'Dear God I am sorry for pushing.' Pupils make outstanding progress and there is no gap between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and others. The behaviour around the school reflects the caring attitude towards each other and the staff have high expectations and model exemplary behaviour in their own professional lives. The Pupil Council has a strong voice; pupils' views are listened to and acted upon for instance in choosing which charities to support, through this, pupils learn about care for those less fortunate. The clergy from St Mary's and St Augustine's Church are part of the weekly life of the school and work with a representative of the Muslim parents building deep trust and a strong sense of community from within the school's uniquely Christian character, thus no parents have chosen to withdraw their children from collective worship. Attendance is good and has moved to above national averages indicating pupils' love for their school, its character and the way they feel valued. There are twenty different languages being spoken at Porter Croft and much work is focused on building pupils' skills in speaking and reading English. Signs around the school show both words and pictures enabling pupils to understand the importance of symbols. Symbols such as the cross are therefore easily understood by all, this is a school working together to better understand God.

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

Collective worship is a special time of day when the whole school gathers. Music is played as the school assembles to add to the atmosphere and all the staff attend, reinforcing the importance of this special time to the pupils. The worship is planned in themes and links with social and emotional aspects of learning, the worship theme is continued into learning in the classrooms. The pupils have written a whole school prayer based on two of its values: thankfulness and respect. They enjoy reciting it, it begins 'dear God', and is therefore inclusive for pupils from other beliefs. They also know a prayer and response. Worship includes a Bible reading which is then related to other stories the pupils know or to the school's values, reinforcing the importance of the values and pupils' understanding. During collective worship there is a time for reflection where pupils are encouraged to think about others and their own lives, this supports their spiritual development. The vicar runs the Wonder Club which also furthers pupils' spirituality through discussion and interesting activities after school. Pupils are involved in worship but have not yet been given the opportunity to plan or deliver it themselves. The wide range of visitors to collective worship have enhanced the pupils' learning about Jesus and the Anglican tradition. The school visits St Mary's Church for the major festivals and as a teaching resource, pupils know the artefacts and their uses. There are links on the school's website to St Mary's Church and a similar link back to the school enabling members of the congregation to keep in touch with the work the school is doing and pupils' involvement in the wider community.

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

RE is of significant importance to the school and given equal importance to all the other taught subjects; it is integrated into the whole school curriculum as a separate subject and valued by all the staff, as a result pupils' knowledge and progress is very good. The teaching

of RE is always good and frequently outstanding this is represented by the work in the pupils' books, their engagement with the teacher during lessons and the monitoring of their work. In an imaginative lesson in the reception class the children were learning about the things which make us special. The teacher had prepared a box which when opened contained a mirror helping the children to see themselves and understand that they were unique and special people to God. This encouraged an interesting discussion where the children spoke to their partners about why they thought they were special. In Year 2 the children were learning about Judaism and the teacher skilfully linked forgiveness, Teshuvah, with Christian forgiveness, the lesson ended with a short reflection about mistakes that we have made helping children to develop spiritually. The creative linking of religions by the teacher gave the children a deeper understanding of one of the school's values, forgiveness. RE is strengthened in the school by the subject co-ordinator's clear focus and energy to promote her subject and the staff speak of the strong support they receive from the co-ordinator enabling pupils to make very good progress. The Year 5 pupils were considering the importance of faith and what it means to have a faith. The teacher linked similarities between Islam and Christianity and one pupil described her understanding of faith as trusting Allah as he will always be with you. This wide ranging approach encourages all pupils to make connections in their beliefs resulting in a language based and theologically rich curriculum. Teachers' lesson planning is clear, as are the expected pupils' learning outcomes, the planning focuses on individual pupils and ensures that all can succeed. The governors monitor RE closely and develop short reports which are fed back to all the governors, as a result, all are well informed about the pupils' progress. The co-ordinator attends training and shares this with all the staff; she monitors pupils' progress through teacher support, drop-ins to classrooms, informal conversations and checking learning in their books. Assessments of pupils' work show a similar level of progress as reading, writing and maths combined. The school balances the teaching of Christianity with other world faiths as two-thirds to one third and the resources for RE reflect the importance the school gives to this area of the curriculum. Pupils understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is not yet developed.

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

The headteacher leads the school's Christian vision through his own strong personal faith and his wish to cultivate a school ethos in which all love and respect one another and cultivate God's work. Through his energetic and enthusiastic leadership all are encouraged to succeed and this is clearly demonstrated through pupils' progress, shared goals and living the spirit of Koinonia in a truly inclusive environment. Governors, staff, pupils and parents all share the values which are so evident throughout the school, this results in a community focused on partnership. The school has worked with the community to share its unique approach to learning about God and this has enabled trust from all the parents who know their children will be nurtured. The links with the parish are strong and the clergy play a major role working with the community representative planning worship, which links the school's values with prayer and reflection. Governors monitor and evaluate the teaching regularly, reporting their findings to governors to robustly challenge and support the school. Parents emphasise the community feeling of the school and the way that the headteacher and staff are always available and approachable, they find the mission statement inspiring - together we are Porter Croft. They enjoy the Christian ethos of the school and its approach to God and beliefs, encouraging all to have a faith in order to make choices. Parents know they are listened to and their views are important to the school, as a result they feel valued. Recently they have taken over some focused charity fundraising on behalf of the school and feel proud to have the trust of the school. Links with the Diocese are good and the school speaks highly of the support they received when becoming an academy. The impact of the school's links is a very positive working environment. The school's website proudly proclaims its foundation as a Church of England school, Porter Croft thrives in its uniquely inclusive, Christian atmosphere.

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