

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

All Saints Church of England Primary School, Kirkby Overblow

Main Street, Kirkby Overblow, Harrogate HG3 1HD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Leeds
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Date of inspection	8 March 2018
Date of last inspection	17 May 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Aided 121630
Headteacher	Louise Newport
Inspector's name and number	Malcolm Price 627

School context

All Saints Primary School is a smaller than average village school with 90 children currently on roll. The majority of children attend the school from beyond its catchment area. The school has relatively few children with additional needs although there are increasing numbers of vulnerable children, including some from adopted backgrounds. The headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection but is due to leave the school in the immediate future. The school is currently going through the process of academisation with links to a church school trust. The school benefits from a close relationship with All Saints Church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian character and inclusive ethos of the school are demonstrated in exemplary relationships and a strong focus on the shared values of love, forgiveness and compassion
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) both support this distinctiveness, offering opportunities for children to participate, engage and develop spiritually
- School leaders provide a nurturing environment based on Christian values, which is enabling children to thrive personally, enjoy school life, achieve well and make very good progress academically

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the distinctive Christian character of the school is preserved and continues to develop through the period of change to a new headteacher and through the forthcoming academisation process
- Maximise the benefits of RE to children through increasing their subject knowledge and through providing opportunities for them to experience places of worship of other faiths and to appreciate other expressions of Christianity
- Explore additional ways for members of the school community, including children, to be involved in evaluating the impact of collective worship on the spiritual life of the school

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

The distinctive Christian character of this school is evident in the way that all members of the school community speak of their shared values and in the positive way that they treat each other. The refined focus on three core values – love, forgiveness and compassion – more clearly represents the school’s strongly inclusive ethos and has enabled children to explore these values more deeply. For example, children show their understanding of compassion by quoting the story of the Good Samaritan and explaining that Jesus said ‘love your neighbour as yourself’. They can extend this understanding to their own actions in the way that they ‘fill each other’s buckets’ with positive comments and compliments, and also through their practical support for a school in Ethiopia. Children also have a well-developed appreciation of forgiveness based on their understanding that ‘Jesus forgave all our sins’. This helps them to express the need to ‘look at the good in others’. The values underpin and inform the school’s approach to inclusion, particularly in relation to supporting children with additional needs or with specific challenges, and this is demonstrated in the positive and accepting relationships that children have with each other. Parents rightly observe that the school feels like ‘one big family’. The Christian character results from the clear vision that school leaders have. For instance, governors say that ‘we try to bring church into school and school into church’. Children say that being part of a church school makes a difference in that ‘it helps us to be a better person’. This distinctiveness is represented in displays such as the school values tree with acorns representing children both at the school and those who have left. It is also shown in classroom areas and in the dragon’s garden where children can experience quiet and reflection. Prayer is a feature of each school day, for example through saying grace before lunch. Bibles are evident in classrooms and references to biblical passages are included in displays. In all these ways, the school is living up to its mission statement that each member of the school community should ‘flourish and achieve as a child of God’. This is equally demonstrated in children’s academic progress and attainment. Achievement is typically well above local and national averages in the core curriculum areas. Where there are occasional concerns, the school has responded by providing intervention programmes, such as Active Literacy, and additional input from both teachers and teaching assistants.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship, in a range of formats, is an important part of each school day, providing an opportunity for all members of the school community to reflect on their shared values. For example, the story of the Gentle Giant encouraged children to consider the importance of not judging people by outside appearances. Children were able to relate this story to their understanding of forgiveness by connecting it with Jesus’ encounter with Zacchaeus the tax collector. They were also able to link it to other parables that Jesus told, including those they have learnt about in RE, and to explain the mistake of ‘judging a book by its cover’. All acts of worship include an opportunity for children to reflect and to join in with prayers. They know the Lord’s Prayer and each act of worship ends with children saying and signing the Grace, led by one of the Year 6 ambassadors. This action in itself both represents and builds up the sense of community and togetherness. Children sing well and clearly enjoy this aspect of worship. The school has recently broadened the range of worship songs to include more modern as well as traditional worship songs. Children are encouraged to lead collective worship, particularly the sharing assemblies that are attended by parents. When they visit the parish church for major festivals, they choose the music, write prayers and make a significant contribution to leading the services. The ambassadors plan and lead worship each term based on themes from the Values for Life programme. As part of worship, children are encouraged to commend each other for kind and positive actions and this is represented by ‘filling their bucket’. This is an example of how the values underpinning collective worship are impacting positively on attitudes and relationships. Collective worship is well supported by clergy and members from All Saints Church. Children particularly enjoy the contribution of the Open the Book team. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of collective worship is carried out by staff, governors and church leaders. This includes informally gathering children’s comments following acts of worship. There is some scope to expand the range of those involved in evaluation and also to diversify the methods, especially in terms of how the views of children are gathered and acted upon.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Strong subject leadership and the dissemination of training linked to the new Understanding Christianity framework have resulted in those teaching RE becoming more confident in its delivery. As a result, children display good attitudes towards RE and are beginning to use their skills in enquiry, interpretation and reflection to help them understand key messages of faith. This is often linked to the development of the same skills in other curriculum areas, notably English. Through recent thematic studies of incarnation and salvation, children are developing a wider range of vocabulary to enable them to express themselves. For instance, they can explain that 'salvation is about Jesus dying for our sins'. Teachers give children opportunities to discuss important and sometimes challenging questions. For instance, when debating the question of who was responsible for Jesus' death, children were confident to express a range of views, including that 'God had a plan for Jesus to die so that we could be forgiven'. Similarly, in discussing why some Christians go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, children were able to suggest that some people 'might want to feel closer to their faith'. They could also explain that 'a pilgrimage is a visit to a sacred place for any religion'. Children demonstrate a good knowledge of new testament stories and parables and an ability to apply them to their own behaviour. For example, they are able to link the story of the Good Samaritan to the value of love, stating that 'Jesus told us to care for everyone' and that 'we need to be like the Samaritan'. Children can also link their studies in RE to the school values in other ways. For instance, they know that Jesus showed compassion when he 'healed the blind man'. Children are not yet so confident in making links to stories from the old testament or to their learning about other faiths. Although these aspects of RE form a part of their studies, children's understanding is limited by the lack of opportunities to visit places of worship of other faiths and Christian denominations. One example, however, where this has benefitted children is the contribution of a governor from a Christian Orthodox background. In terms of children's engagement and achievements through discussion and debate in lessons, standards of attainment in RE are in line with national expectations and with standards in other curriculum areas. Occasionally, written work resulting from RE lessons does not have the same high profile or reach the same standards. Good systems are in place for assessing and recording individual children's attainment and progress at the end of each term, and action is being taken to revise the current assessment format in line with the Understanding Christianity guidance.

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

School leaders have a strongly shared understanding of the school's vision and values and have worked well together to maintain and develop its distinctive Christian character. The headteacher, leadership team, governors and church leaders present a unified approach and articulate the same vision for the school. The result of this can be seen in the quality of teamwork and relationships at all levels. For example, the revisiting of the school values to provide a clearer focus involved all school leaders and children's own contribution was highly valued. Governors, particularly the joint chairs, have a clear idea of the priorities for the school and have taken steps to widen the skills base within the governing body. They agree that maintaining the success of the school as a church school through the period of transfer to a new headteacher and through the forthcoming process of academisation is a key priority. The partnership with All Saints Church is strong, despite the fact that most children travel to school from outside the parish, and the school is well supported by the vicar. This relationship benefits children not only in terms of opportunities for collective worship but also in support for their studies in RE. Foundation governors are proactive in arranging visits for children to the parish church. School leaders encourage children in leadership roles and value their opinions. Children in their final year take on a range of responsibilities including school ambassadors, house captains and sports officers. Children are also able to share their views and contribute to school development through the school council and the eco committee. The school council has been involved in the redesigning of the dragon's garden. School leaders help children to gain a wider perspective on the world and to show compassion for those less fortunate than themselves, particularly through the link with Andinet School and the Link Ethiopia project, as part of which children have raised funds for a donkey library to support rural schools. In addition, the school has links with an inner city school in Derby which school leaders are keen to re-establish. Finally, school leaders have made very good progress towards implementing the areas for development from the previous inspection.

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