

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Kirkburton Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

School Hill, Kirkburton, Huddersfield. HD8 0SG

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Leeds
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Kirklees
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date of inspection	22 nd November 2016
Date of last inspection	18 th January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	First School 107745
Headteacher	Patricia Brooke
Inspector's name and number	Mark Edwards 837

School context

The school is a smaller than average first school serving a semi-rural community. Currently there are 137 pupils on role most of whom come from of a white British background. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. The school works closely with the local church school pyramid partnership. A new extension to the school was opened in September 2016. During the academic year 2014/2015 there was a significant number of staff changes. The headteacher has been in post since November 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirkburton C of E Aided First School as a Church of England school are good

- Strong leadership of the headteacher supported by a committed and informed governing body that ensures that the school's Christian values have a positive impact upon achievement and personal wellbeing.
- A clear emphasis upon the school's core chosen values that are understood by pupils who are able to apply them to their daily actions.
- Pupils' good behaviour linked, in particular, to the value of friendship and responsibility that promotes positive relationships and a sense of caring for each other.
- Collective worship that provides pupils with good opportunities to reflect, pray and sing all making a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual wellbeing.
- Creative use of school space that enables pupils to reflect and develop a positive and independent approach to prayer.

Areas to improve

- To provide opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship on a regular basis.
- To develop pupils' understanding of diversity and Christianity as a world religion.
- To continue to develop effective partnerships with the local church and explore how the wider community can be engaged to enhance the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

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

All members of the school community share a passion in promoting the school's distinctive Christian values that is moving the school forward as a Christian community. In particular the values of responsibility, respect and trust are drivers for strong and positive relationships between all members of the school community. Parents cherish these values and staff ensure they permeate throughout all aspects of the school's curriculum. Children are able to articulate these values and have a clear understanding of how they can be lived out on a day-to-day basis.

The school's reflective room is well used and contributes to pupils' spiritual development. The room provides opportunities for pupils to engage with a number of resources and respond to events in their own lives as well as world events through the writing of prayers. Due to the interactive nature of the room staff feel they are able to gauge how the children are feeling spiritually and can respond appropriately.

Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard. The school promotes individual responsibility well and as a result pupils are caring. This was particularly evident during playtimes, pupils are eager to support each other and this is demonstrated well by pupils through the use of a friendship stop.

Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith and their opportunities to develop an understanding of diversity is less developed. The school endeavours to support this aspect of its work through charitable fund raising and pupils take a lead role in developing these activities.

The school has high expectations for the standard of educational achievement for its pupils. Key Stage one results are at or above national standards and phonics is improving. With small numbers of pupils, statistical analysis is difficult; the school is able to articulate individual case studies that demonstrate the support given to individual children. Children recognise the importance of religious education (RE) and through asking pupils to reflect upon biblical stories they can link these stories to the school's core values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The headteacher's strong leadership of collective worship ensures it is given a high priority and is valued by all pupils. Recent changes in the way it is planned and delivered through themes, linked to the school's values, has made a positive impact upon the way staff are able to follow this up in class and make links in all curriculum areas.

The act of collective worship seen during the inspection demonstrates embedded routines; confident singing, a high level of engagement, and an eagerness to take part in interactive aspects. Opportunities for reflection during collective worship highlight the importance placed upon spirituality.

Planning shows that Bible stories are used to support and illustrate key themes. The school recognises that further opportunities for pupils to be involved in planning and delivery will enhance the quality of collective worship. Monitoring and evaluation has developed the school's understanding of the quality of collective worship. The school would benefit from the inclusion of more stakeholders in this aspect of their work to ensure everyone understands the impact and findings can inform strategic development.

Pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of prayer and value the opportunities they have to create their own prayers and see those of others. They link this opportunity closely to their use of the reflective room in school. What is less developed in the school's provision for collective worship is pupils' understanding of the Trinity as it pertains to the Christian faith. Pupils have a developing understanding of the liturgy that is common to both school and church services they attend, which demonstrates an understanding of the Anglican traditions.

The school regularly holds acts of collective worship at the local church and this has been maintained throughout the interregnum. Parents value and understand the importance of the link with the local church and talk positively about the whole school acts of worship held in church to mark significant festivals in the Christian calendar.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) enjoys an important status in the school and pupils enjoy these lessons. In lessons pupils show high levels of engagement and interest. This is reflected in parents' comments, with one citing an example of their child accurately baptising all the teddies and dolls at home as a result of a recent topic on baptism.

Teachers demonstrate good levels of subject knowledge, and their questioning skills require pupils to explore ideas and to think. Pupils enjoy the variety of practical activities and in addressing an action for the last inspection staff and pupils capture these practical experiences using photos. The school has developed an innovative cohort book that captures pupils' progression over time. As these books are added to each year pupils are able to reflect upon past

learning and it is clear these books help them to recall past concepts learnt.

The school follows the Kirklees Agreed Syllabus and then creatively takes units of work and makes them bespoke to the school. This enables the school to weave in their values into the lessons thus contributes to the effectiveness of RE to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Assessment procedures are in place that reflect current developments in assessment thinking and a new database gives the school good data to judge standards going forward. Current data shows that pupils' achievements in RE at the expected and above standard are high and are comparable with national standards in other subjects.

The leadership of RE has recently been reorganised with the leadership now shared between two members of staff. The school understands the importance of creating professional development opportunities to strengthen this aspect of leadership. Staff work closely with other schools in the local pyramid of church schools order to moderate standards.

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

The headteacher has provided effective direction for the school's distinctive Christian character over the short period since her appointment. In spite of recent instability of staffing, the school's Christian vision is clearly understood by the school community and is having a significant impact upon the spiritual development of pupils.

The headteacher has worked together with the school community to review the school's ethos statement and establish a clear set of values and has addressed an aspect of development from the last inspection. These values are clearly on display around the school and the entrance area display, that includes reflective music, clearly signals to anyone visiting the importance the school places on developing the spirituality of the pupils.

A well-informed governing body supports the headteacher. The governors show a passion for developing the school's Christian distinctiveness and have clearly had an input into the school development plan and monitoring strategies. The headteacher has developed a plan for religious education and collective worship that meets statutory requirements and is creative in its approach. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with other church schools in the local pyramid of schools has brought mutual benefits both in moderating standards. Another clear benefit of pyramid involvement is that it enables pupils to interact with children from other schools during joint projects led by staff in the pyramid structure.

Staff work together as a team to promote high standards of teaching and pastoral care which the school leaders consider to be essential to the academic and personal development of the pupils. Strong relationships within the school based upon trust and respect contribute to good staff well being and mutual support.

During the interregnum the school and church have been able to maintain strong links and in the very short time the new vicar has been in post she has supported the school pastorally and has quickly developed positive relationships with the pupils and the school community. Parental engagement is high at the school and parents value the good communication the school has with them. A parental survey based upon its Christian distinctiveness shows high approval for the school's work. Parents feel comfortable coming into school and say staff know their children well and value the way staff support their children both academically and pastorally.

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