

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### All Saints Featherstone Church of England Academy

Willow Lane, Featherstone, Pontefract WF7 6BQ	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Leeds</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 February 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	Enhance Academy Trust
Date of inspection	23 March 2017
Date of last inspection	16 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 143960
Headteacher	Matthew Jones
Inspector's name and number	Antoinette Drinkhill 691

#### School context

The school is slightly smaller than average, with 233 pupils on roll and an age range of 3 – 11. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage with below-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is in line with national and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below national averages. The headteacher has been in post since September 2016. Governors recently reconstituted appointing a new Chair and Vice-Chair. The school converted to an academy with Enhance Academy Trust on 1 February 2017.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints Featherstone Church of England Academy as a Church of England school are good

- The inspirational and committed leadership of the recently appointed headteacher has advanced the Christian vision of the school and directly impacted on its every-day life and the achievement of the children.
- The governors and staff team are fully committed to the development of the Christian character and to working together to achieve the best outcomes for all pupils.
- The four core Christian values of the school contribute very well to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners, particularly in relation to respect and compassion for others.
- Religious education (RE), collective worship (CW) and especially prayer are seen as central aspects of the school life, cultivating spiritual and moral development and inspiring learners to work hard and achieve well.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are founded on their growing understanding and use of the school's Christian values.

#### Areas to improve

- Extend pupils' knowledge of diverse cultures and faiths, including multi-cultural Christianity, so that they can more fully understand and respect differences.
- Embed assessment and differentiation in religious education (RE) so there is clear challenge for all learners.
- Develop teaching and learning in RE by ensuring that pupils, especially the more able, are consistently supported and challenged to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Provide greater opportunities for all pupils to explore the concept of the Trinity so that they can explain important Christian beliefs about God.
- Support pupils in taking more responsibility for routinely planning and leading collective worship, so that they feel even more involved in worship and further develop their understanding of it.

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

The Christian character of All Saints is expressed in the strong and nurturing relationships across the school. Pupils and their families feel valued and a part of this caring and happy school. Parents comment on how children demonstrate kindness and respect towards each other and they say children 'love coming to school'. Children say that 'teachers are kind' and 'help to build up their confidence for learning' and describe enthusiastically some of the creative learning opportunities they have experienced such as making the Salvadorian Crosses, creating clay pots with one of the foundation governors who volunteers in school and the activities undertaken on 'world book day'.

The school is committed to, 'providing opportunities so that all children achieve the highest level they can because lives can be transformed by what goes on in our school'. This is defined by its mission statement of 'Together we believe, achieve and succeed' and reinforced by the four key Christian values of Compassion, Friendship, Respect and Perseverance. These values have been given a renewed focus since the start of the school year with worship, lessons and displays helping to reinforce the links between each value and Biblical teaching. As a result, children are developing a practical understanding of each Christian value and an appreciation of its impact on their lives. The values are sustained by the school's curriculum drivers of sport, spirituality and creativity, the impact of which has been noticed by pupils, who describe their love of sport and the wider opportunities they are offered such as sports tournaments and games with the play leaders at dinner time. This is evidenced by children's obvious pride in their school and summed up by one pupil's comment of, 'it's much better here, now'. Children are keen to earn a scale for the recently created values fish, which they say helps them to think about and show the school's Christian values. The impact of this raised pupil engagement and confidence is demonstrated by increasing attendance and pupil progress. Children's efforts and achievements in and outside of school are acknowledged and celebrated. The school's behaviour policy gives clear direction in developing the Christian values which encourages and supports children's excellent behaviour.

The school environment contributes well to children's spiritual development and provides opportunities for reflection and prayer that are well used, such as the praying peacock and the prayer box in the school hall. There is a strong sense of belonging and supportive relationships are evident across the school. There are clear support systems for children who experience anxiety, such as the 'worry monster' which children can use to share concerns, which are picked up and dealt with by a member of staff. Children are very supportive of each other and believe that, 'everyone is welcome' at All Saints. They have the opportunity to learn about other world faiths, through RE, theme days and visual displays. However, the school agrees that providing more opportunities for children to engage with people of different faiths and cultures remains an ongoing challenge.

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

Collective worship (CW) is seen to be an important part of school life and a key contributor to the school's ethos. It supports children's understanding of the Christianity, the liturgical calendar and includes stories from the Bible. There is a long term plan that links to key times in the church year as well as biblical themes. The whole school attends church at important times in the year to celebrate major festivals. Children also regularly attend the weekly church services with local parishioners, led by the vicar. This is appreciated and enjoyed by children and parishioners alike. High priority is given to children participating in school CW and Church Services. An increasing variety of adults are involved in leading CW including a 'class assembly' once a week, which is also delivered by pupils who are part of the worship committee. A class worship book is now used to evidence and evaluate class worship, which is becoming more consistently used since the start of the year. Children are encouraged to apply the learning from worship to their everyday lives and explore themes further, such as the notion of trust delivered through the story of Gideon. Links are also made to current events, such as the 'London tragedy' on the day of the inspection with prayers being said. Children say that they enjoy CW and parents agree that they feel welcomed and enjoy class worship and services in church.

Corridors have reflection and response areas as well as displays linked to bible stories such as Noah, the healing of the deaf mute and the creation story. Prayer forms an important part of the school day with many opportunities provided for children to participate in prayer and prayerful activities, such as writing prayers and petitions on a paper flame and placing them on a prayer candle. CW develops pupils' spirituality as well as their social and moral understanding, through a focus on the school's Christian values and how they could be expressed in daily living. Time is also given to reflect upon the 'bigger questions' in life such as the meaning of temptation and the struggle of showing forgiveness. Children are developing their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit which is supported at the start of whole school CW by children opening a Bible to think about God the Father, looking at a cross to think about God the Son and lighting a candle to think about God the Holy Spirit. Further exploration of

the notion of Trinity would allow children to develop a deeper understanding of this key Christian belief.

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

RE is seen as a core curriculum area and is based on the locally agreed syllabus, with Christianity as its central aspect. Children enjoy RE because learning is often exciting and relevant. It impacts positively on pupils' lives in school.

Lessons are based around themes and include a variety of activities to engage learners. There is an evolving, enquiry-based approach which is promoting critical thinking, analysis and reflection. Children say that they enjoy RE and achievement is in line with other core subjects. Progress, which is tracked on the new assessment framework, is good. Pupils learn about five major world faiths and are encouraged to be reflective and empathetic. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson, where children were considering how Hindus worship at home. A table had been set up with labelled items that had been discussed, to support children's understanding. Children were then considering the importance of these items to Hindus. This activity was then linked to children drawing a picture of someone they respected with an explanation of why. They enjoyed the discussion as ways of exploring ideas, and understand where there is no right or wrong answer. Learning in RE is being increasingly linked to developing children's understanding of the similarities and differences between Christian beliefs and those of other faiths. Children particularly enjoyed the Year 6 RE lesson, in which they were learning about the beliefs associated with re-incarnation. The trusting and respectful ethos created by the teacher gave children confidence to openly explore their feelings and justify their thinking on whether reincarnation could be considered a blessing or a curse. Pupils participated in lively debate on their own thoughts and beliefs and listened to others, leading on to a greater understanding of the significance of religious beliefs for some people. Marking and feedback in books provides some challenging questions, to which children respond in an increasingly thoughtful way. Pupils also learn about the importance of helping others through RE and learning about the school's core values, which is evidenced by their care for each other and enthusiasm for fundraising for others.

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

The school's reinvigorated Christian vision, which is supported by all, contributes to the school's positive and caring ethos. The headteacher, who has been in a post since September, provides compassionate and inspiring Christian leadership. Pupils, staff, and parents say that he leads by example and promotes a strong sense of team spirit. He is well supported and challenged by the governors, who have now developed a more strategic vision for the school as a church school. They are regular visitors to the school, undertake monitoring activities and are members of the school's SIAMS working party. The school's Christian character is central in promoting the wellbeing and achievement of all members of the school community and the headteacher has quickly established an atmosphere of mutual trust, openness, and respect. He is building a staff team who share his vision and values. Governors are very dedicated and supportive of the school. They freely give their time, encouragement, and expertise in all aspects of school life. The experienced chair of governors has effectively supported the school through a period of significant staff change and one foundation governor is a regular visitor and works with children across school on creative projects such as coil pot making and Salvadorian cross. An emphasis on the core values has ensured that new staff and parents are fully involved in further developing the Christian vision and foundation governors are actively involved in monitoring the distinctiveness of the school in order to fully contribute to effective evaluation and improvement planning. Systems and procedures for self-evaluation and school improvement have been strengthened, supported by the Diocesan advisor. The headteacher actively seeks advice and incorporates it thoughtfully into the school improvement cycle, to secure best possible outcomes for the school. Self-evaluation rightly identifies professional development as a high priority for the staff team, which includes three newly qualified teachers. The school is also keen to develop teachers' skills, to further to equip them as future leaders.

RE and collective worship are increasingly well-led and contribute effectively to the school's Christian character. Staff would benefit from further regular opportunities to observe good practice in RE and collective worship. The school actively promotes and cultivates links with the church for the benefit of the children. This is supported by the vicar of All Saints church, who works in close partnership with the school. This relationship is valued by the school and parents. Parents fully appreciate the open and strong support given by the headteacher and the staff team. Their comments include, 'This school is a great school' and 'we chose to bring our children here because of the good reputation it has'.

The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship