

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Normanton All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School	
High St, Normanton. WF6 1NR	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Leeds
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of inspection	18 January 2017
Date of last inspection	3 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Infant 108259
Headteacher	Amy Stone
Inspector's name and number	Lynne Gillions 662

School context

The school has 266 pupils from Reception to Year 2. There is also an off-site nursery serving 78 pupils. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. An increasing minority of pupils come from Eastern European families and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who qualify for pupil premium funding is below the national average. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and there are several staff changes. A different chair of governors has also taken up the role.

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

- The values and vision of the headteacher, shared by senior leaders, staff and governors, have resulted in a school where the Christian values of hope, respect, thankfulness, perseverance, friendship and forgiveness are deeply embedded and make a positive contribution to the excellent behaviour and attainment which is consistently above national averages.
- Strong, trusting relationships throughout the school provide a positive climate where children can rise to challenges and confidently ask and answer questions which help expand their thinking and understanding.
- The mutually supportive relationship with the church enriches the spiritual development of the children and alongside collective worship and some excellent teaching in religious education gives children a good understanding of Bible stories and Christian belief.
- The school provides an exciting curriculum with visits and special events which make learning fun and which contribute to the high standards of achievement.
- Leaders are committed to developing and equipping staff in their roles and this is exemplified in the excellent subject leadership of religious education.
- The link with a school in Tanzania gives children an awareness of a different global community and helps them empathise with the needs of others.

Areas to improve

- Develop a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating and continue to extend the governors' role in that process so that they are involved in a wider range of monitoring activities alongside those of the senior leadership team and ensure all stakeholders are consulted. Areas requiring improvement should then feed into the School Development Plan and good practice should be identified, celebrated and shared so that the school's performance as a church school continues to strengthen.

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

Christian values are deeply embedded and all stakeholders recognise the fundamental role they play in school life and the impact they have on standards, behaviour, relationships and pupil welfare. There is a focus each half term on one of the school's chosen values: hope, respect, thankfulness, perseverance, friendship or forgiveness. This is giving children a clear understanding of each value and its application in their lives. They talk of respect as 'treating people nicely', friendship as 'sticking together' and perseverance as 'keeping going'. They apply them in their own lives both in school and at home. This living out of the values creates a harmonious, caring environment in school where children are seen as special and made in the image of God. They treat each other with respect and behaviour is outstanding. Children thrive in this environment and this leads to consistently high standards of attainment and progress which are above national averages. School seeks to break down barriers to learning and has appointed a Polish speaking teaching assistant to support the Eastern European children and a learning mentor to support the needs of vulnerable families and ensure children are well nurtured.

Relationships are strong and supportive for all members of the school family. There is a genuine sense of belonging to the school for all stakeholders. Children enjoy being at school, staff are obviously a highly committed team with a potent sense of togetherness. Parents really appreciate what the school does for their children and appreciate the hard work of the staff and their willingness to talk to them and address any issues effectively.

School provides lots of opportunities to nurture children's spirituality. There are reflection areas in school and two spiritual gardens and children say they like to go in them and sit quietly sometimes. Indeed, the whole school environment celebrates the Christian foundation of the school with high quality displays throughout the building. Special experiences such as visits from the Hand to Mouth team and visits to a farm to act out the nativity story enhance children's learning and make a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Teachers are particularly good at questioning the children so that they stretch their thinking about spiritual issues.

The school is valued by parents and members of the community and the strong relationship with the church is a significant factor in developing children's spirituality and rooting children into their locality. Visits to local care homes, involvement in church services and fundraising activities all contribute to children's understanding of different communities. The school's links with Tanzania are also making a significant contribution to their awareness of global communities. Children show empathy for the pupils in the Tanzanian school who have no electricity and fewer resources. They recognise how fortunate they are in comparison and are pleased to raise funds through events such as their Christmas market.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a central and very important part of school life. Children enjoy it and all staff attend and recognise its value in their own lives. This helps create a sense of a family standing shoulder to shoulder in support of each other. Children respond well during worship. They are encouraged to participate in dramatizing stories. They are asked how a story might develop and this helps them all engage as individuals. They willingly respond to questions and talk with partners. They sing well and respond appropriately during prayers and reflection times. Children are able to link Bible stories to their Christian values. Jesus healing the man lowered through the roof showed the perseverance of his friends as did Joseph persevering in finding a resting place for himself and Mary. They know the main Christian festivals and understand the significance of some of the seasons of the year such as Advent and Epiphany. They were however unsure how these seasons linked to the liturgical colours used across school. They know that Jesus is an important figure in Christianity and is seen as the Son of God, one child describing him as 'the one who came to save us'. They talk about God, the Father as the one who created the world and the Holy Spirit as being always with us and around us.

Children understand that prayer is talking to God and they are happy to participate when invited to do so. Prayers are said at lunchtime and at the end of the day. Children also have opportunities to write prayers and to say their own prayers spontaneously, particularly during class worship. There is a lunchtime prayer group attended by children, particularly those members of the collective worship committee, and open to staff, governors, clergy, church members and families. This is a fine example of the unity experienced throughout the school community and is giving children a broad understanding of how they can pray. 'We can pray anytime.'

Pupils are involved in planning and leading collective worship in their own classrooms and in class-led worship times to which parents are invited. They also participate in special celebrations in the church. The support of the clergy and church members for collective worship is a strength of the school. All teachers lead worship as do some visitors such as the Hand to Mouth team. This means children experience a range of worship styles.

Collective worship is very well planned and structured around Christian values, Bible stories, celebrations and SEAL materials. It helps to successfully embed Christian principles into school life. It is monitored and evaluated with contributions from other stakeholders though this could be more systematic with more governor involvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is a highly valued subject. It is led competently, staff are well trained, there are very good resources to support teaching and this leads to high standards of pupil attainment. Progress and attainment are in line with other core subjects and standards are at least in line, with a significant number attaining higher than national expectations. Children enjoy the subject and learn well. Teaching across school is at least good with much outstanding practice in evidence. The curriculum offers a wealth of creative experiences including Godly play where children become absorbed in the telling of Bible stories, art and craft work, technology, construction activities, outdoor activities and messy church days which are supported by church members. Children can make choices about how they respond in lessons. One child chose to respond to the creation story by describing creation using a light box. Teachers consistently ask questions which expand children's thinking. This is a strength of teaching and evidences the quality and consistency of staff training. Children respond well with thoughtful ideas and reflections. They have a good understanding of biblical teaching, drawing on examples from Bible stories to support their views and linking them readily to Christian values. RE makes a very strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children.

There is a coherence between what children experience in collective worship and what they explore in RE. This leads some children to a deeper understanding of Christianity that belies their young age. In a Year 2 lesson, one child said, 'God does big things inside you like changing bad things to good' and another when describing the Holy Spirit said, 'God whispers to you and tells you not to make a bad choice.' Throughout school children are encouraged to ask big questions which don't necessarily have answers such as 'Who made God?' Teachers encourage and value their contributions and as a result children are becoming accomplished at asking and responding to questions and this is developing their thinking skills. Work that is recorded in books is marked well, addressing RE objectives and a system of assessment is in place and pupil performance is tracked across the year. Children have a good understanding of Christianity and a growing awareness of other faiths. They can talk about different festivals such as Eid and they greatly benefit from visits to the mosque and synagogue as well as to different churches. These are broadening their horizons and giving them an early understanding of diversity.

A monitoring system is in place which includes lesson observations, scrutiny of work and data analysis by senior leaders. More foundation governor involvement would help outcomes to feed systematically into the governing body's monitoring activities.

The subject is led by an enthusiastic and able subject leader who is well qualified to share her expertise. She keeps up with new initiatives seeking to embed them into school practice and bring about continued improvement.

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

The school is led by an outstanding headteacher who has built an excellent team spirit throughout the whole school community. Together with committed senior leaders, and ably supported by all staff and governors, she has ensured that Christian values are deeply embedded into school life. The high quality of the leadership team is a strength of the school. The shared vision is lived out day by day and modelled by staff to the children and all stakeholders recognise that this is an essential element of the school's success.

Leaders have put in place an effective and challenging curriculum which is enabling children to achieve high standards. They ensure that all children can access their education as evidenced in their appointment of a learning mentor and a Polish speaking teaching assistant and the strong support given by teaching assistants to individuals and groups. The appointment of the RE and collective worship leader to the senior leadership team reflects the status that is given to the school's Christian foundation.

The school has excellent links with the clergy and church members. They are described as 'the best they have ever been'. Parents are also very supportive of the school and appreciate the workshops that have been held to help them support their children appropriately. The school also partners with other schools and shares good practice. Self-evaluation takes place but needs to be more formalised with clearer roles for governors in learning walks, scrutiny of work and visits to lessons and collective worship. They have begun to make changes and now need to ensure that systematic procedures recognise the school's many strengths and lead to continued improvement.

Normanton All Saints Infant School is an outstanding example of what can be achieved with a committed, cohesive team who share the same vision, in creating a happy and harmonious school which seeks to develop children to their full potential.