

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

### Kirk Ireton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street  
Kirk Ireton  
Ashbourne  
Derbyshire  
DE6 3LD

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese**

**Derby**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Derbyshire

Date of inspection

25 May 2017

Date of last inspection

28 May 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Controlled 112832

Headteacher

Peter Johnston

Inspector's name and number

John Clapham (775)

#### School context

Kirk Ireton is a smaller than average rural primary school serving 50 children between two classes. The proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium (those eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care) are below the national average overall, but above average in some year groups. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are above average, although no children are currently supported with statements or Education Health Care Plans. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection. The school entered into a formal federation with another local church school in 2015, with whom they share a head teacher.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirk Ireton as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Kirk Ireton is a highly inclusive church school which is characterised by high levels of care, kindness and compassion across the whole school community.
- High quality teaching and rigorous monitoring of progress ensures that children's individual learning needs are well met, with an improving picture of progress across school.
- Each child is valued as a child of God within a positive nurturing environment. This leads to confident, happy children who have high levels of self-esteem.
- At Kirk Ireton, there is a strong sense of community and belonging, with mutually beneficial links between school, church and the wider village community.

#### Areas to improve

- Communicate the school's distinctive Christian values more explicitly, including through the school website.
- Provide opportunities for children to be fully involved in evaluating the impact of collective worship.
- Develop children's understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith.

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

Distinctively Christian values are implicit in all areas of school life and clearly shape the life and work of this caring church school. The whole staff team are supportive of the Christian ethos and distinctiveness of the school. As noted by a governor, 'the sense of belonging as a church school has meant that our children are quietly confident, articulate and respectful.' The school's Christian character undoubtedly has a high profile as part of the everyday life of the school, although this is not explicitly unpacked and communicated. Kirk Ireton school has a strong sense of community, nurturing kindness, thoughtfulness and respect for the views of others. Parents describe the school as 'a real community with an inclusive family feel.' The nurturing of children's mental health is prioritised, with well targeted pastoral support that meets needs sensitively as they arise. Children feel able to talk about their worries. They have confidence that when they use the 'worry box' or zip their worries into the mouth of a soft toy (a character called Burt) that they will be cared for and listened to. Children know that any issues are dealt with quickly and fairly and so they are confident and feel valued. As a result, attendance is very high and children value school as a safe, happy place. Children are supported in developing quality relationships between each other, with older children naturally looking after younger children. Children at Kirk Ireton naturally care for each other and treat each other with kindness and respect. As one child put it, 'it doesn't matter what you look like or what you wear- it just matters that you are kind.' Behaviour is of a high standard, with issues dealt with fairly, consistently and with care and compassion. Parents report that they appreciate the impact of this as children realise how important it is to give consideration to each other. Children take their responsibilities seriously and enjoy caring for each other as a whole school community. They are keen to live out their Christian values and demonstrate their care and compassion through a wide range of charity support and fundraising, including Water Aid, The Royal British Legion and Children in Need, as well as food collections for a local food bank. The school has engaged well with the new Understanding Christianity teaching resources, which have dramatically increased children's engagement with and understanding of the Bible, with clear relevance to their lives. Children are empowered to think for themselves and be clear on their own beliefs, whilst respecting the beliefs and opinions of others. Religious education (RE) gives opportunity for reflection and 'deep thinking', and equips children to make sense of difficult issues. Opportunities for spiritual reflection are built in to many of the activities and events that are part of the vibrant life of this village school. Both RE and the wider curriculum cater well for children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development (SMSC). Children are engaged and able to explain and justify their thinking. The impact of this is high levels of independence, resilience, and a love of learning.

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

At Kirk Ireton, collective worship is valued as an integral part of the life of the school, where all staff and children gather daily to share in the school's distinctively Christian character. Daily worship at Kirk Ireton is relevant, inspirational and inclusive. It invokes a strong sense of community and clearly inspires the thinking and day to day actions of the whole school. Well planned worship draws strongly on biblical material, supporting children's high level of biblical understanding. This was an area for development from the previous inspection and has now been fully addressed. Collective worship is equipping the children with a growing understanding of a range of Christian tradition and practice, as well as a good understanding of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. An ecumenical team of clergy plan and lead regular worship, giving the children the sense of a wider Christian community beyond the parish church. This team, alongside the governors evaluate the impact of collective worship although there are currently few opportunities for children to do so. Through weekly church visits, the use of simple liturgy and altar cloths made by themselves, the children are developing a good understanding of local Anglican practice and Christian festivals. Children, staff and parents enjoy many positive experiences of worship. These include collective worship in the parish church each Wednesday, as well as events in other local churches, such as the recent 'Experience Jesus Day' in Brailsford, and local cluster activities in St Mary's Church. Children are highly involved in regularly planning and leading worship each week, making worship interactive, engaging and relevant. Singing is an integral part of worship, with songs sung with reverence and meaning and regularly chosen by the children. As part of collective worship, children regularly identify 'positive people who make school a happy place'. Within the study of the value of kindness, children identified peers who had been kind and discussed what they had done and what difference this made. This not only had the impact of raising self-esteem, but also has helped ensure that key messages for collective worship make an impact on attitudes and behaviours across school. Prayer is an integral part of the rhythm of the school day, with well-established routines that are valued by the children. These include 'prayer sticks', which enable each child to be regularly prayed for within the classroom setting, and a clear focus linking prayer in RE and collective worship.

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

The headteacher and his team are highly dedicated to the school and passionately and articulately live out the school's distinctively Christian values with love and compassion. The staff and governors have established and maintained a distinctively Christian ethos where each child is nurtured as a child of God. The head teacher leads by example, constantly striving to further improve provision so that the children are given the best opportunities possible. As he explained, 'every day, we always look at what we can do better.' This culture of constant improvement results in happy valued children who are independent, resilient and have a tangible love of learning. Whilst the school's Christian values and vision impact positively on the school, they are not yet communicated clearly through the school website and other documentation. The school is an integral part of the local community and the church family and has strengthened mutually beneficial partnerships with both. As put by the vicar 'this school is integral to the mission of the church community and we benefit from each other.' School special services held in church are well supported. The head teacher supports other schools as a local authority link advisor and governor trainer, a National Leader of Education and a member of the strategic board for the local teaching school alliance. This has helped develop invaluable leadership skills in the head teacher and his team. As a result of this, all staff are of one accord and working collaboratively. The professional development of the whole team is planned strategically, supporting all staff in fulfilling their true potential and impacts strongly on the leadership and direction of the school. As part of the formal federation with Carsington, the governing body shared between both schools is highly committed to the life of the school. Strong underpinning systems and structures ensure that the school is led consistently well. Governors are highly involved in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the life of the school, including the school's Christian distinctiveness. As a result, they have a sound knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. High levels of engagement in training opportunities, governor collaboration across the cluster and a rotation of roles within the governing body as part of succession planning have ensured that governors are well equipped to continue their good work. Areas for development from the previous inspection have been met. RE and collective worship are well led and meet all statutory requirements.

SIAMS report May 2017 Kirk Ireton Church of England Primary School DE6 3LD