

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ravensthorpe Church of England Junior School

Myrtle Road, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, WF13 3AS

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Leeds
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kirklees
Date/s of inspection	14 July 2017
Date of last inspection	March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary controlled 107699
Headteacher	Sheldon Parkin
Inspector's name and number	Nigel Castledine 652

School context

The school is much larger than average, serving an urban community with significantly high levels of social deprivation. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, largely from Pakistani backgrounds, most of whom are Muslim. Nearly all have English as an additional language.

The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with additional needs is well above average.

Since the last inspection in 2012, the school has appointed a new headteacher and two deputy headteachers. There have also been a significant number of changes within the staff team.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ravensthorpe as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school is a welcoming, inclusive oasis of peace and friendship for all families of any faith or none, where all are inspired by its gospel-centred ethos and nurtured by its Christian care.
- The importance placed on faith is respectful in its approach to developing pupils' spirituality, embracing the beliefs of the local community, particularly Christianity and also Islam.
- High achievement and accelerated pupil academic progress are underpinned by the school's emphasis on stimulating learning experiences throughout the school that motivate all in striving to achieve their best.
- The impact of collective worship is greatly enhanced by the beneficial links made to biblical teachings that support the school's chosen Christian values and their consistent application within the pupils' daily lives.

Areas to improve

- Extend the pupils' involvement in collective worship by providing them with appropriate regular opportunities to grow in confidence in its planning, delivery and evaluation with increasing independence.
- Include evaluation of the impact of Christian distinctiveness as an integral part of governors' and senior leaders' systematic assessment procedures for educational standards, pupil nurture and school policies.

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

The deeply affirming Christian ethos of this school is the foundation of its inspiration for all pupils in gaining a love of learning. A Year 4 pupil commented, "I really like being in school – the lessons are so exciting." The school's motto, "Dream big, aim high and achieve more," encourages all pupils to achieve excellent standards of achievement. Almost all pupils are able to sustain accelerated progress from a lower than national average entry point to meet and in many cases exceed national expectations by the end of Y6. Success is possible for every pupil because the school's rich curriculum is well-resourced and structured to meet the needs of all learners. Extra-curricular activities provide pupils with opportunities and experiences not always readily available within the community or home setting.

These academic strengths are supported by the school's inclusive faith values. They stem from Christian belief, whilst being mindful of the teachings of Islam and the other faiths of the local community. A Year 6 girl explained, 'Our values are for all faiths and beliefs.' The chosen Christian values comprise thankfulness, peace, forgiveness, friendship and compassion. Whilst not prominent in the school's documentation, the Christian values are highly influential in school life and are referred to frequently by both pupils and staff. A Year 5 boy, commenting on behaviour, stated, 'When I help someone, I know this is the right thing to do because it is what Jesus would have done.'

The school works hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time. Christian care is seen in the importance placed on minimising persistent absence. This focus ensures pupils receive a full education that ensures national expectations are met and in many cases exceeded. The school also puts a high priority on the safety and well-being of every pupil, working with families to obtain the best possible outcomes.

Great importance is placed on the development of the whole child, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. This emphasis is integrated into the curriculum so that pupils experience moments of personal spirituality, awe and wonder within their learning. Religious education (RE) also provides open-ended opportunities for spiritual development within its exciting and engaging curriculum. Because pupils are well informed about religions and how they may impact on their lives, they are able to ponder the fundamental meanings and purposes of life and belief.

Pupils are encouraged to show Christian service by taking up roles of responsibility such as the 'centurions' who ensure lesson breaks are a positive time for all. Pupils enjoy giving time to serve on the school council which meets regularly to discuss a wide range of issues. These include Christian stewardship and concern for others shown in the pupils' gifts to the local food bank and generous support for local and international charities.

Mutual respect and care flow from the school's inclusive Christian values of peace, friendship and compassion. New pupils of all cultures and beliefs are carefully supported within school with any language barriers effectively bridged. The school's RE teaching ensures pupils learn about and learn from different faiths in cross-curricular ways, so gaining an informed and inclusive view of major world faiths. It also enriches pupils' understanding and experiences of the global multi-cultural nature of both Christianity and Islam.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Inclusive and inspirational daily collective worship is valued by the whole school community. Worship provides daily opportunity for pupils to praise God, to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and to explore their personal belief. Both pupils and staff actively participate in collective worship through enthusiastic religious song, involvement in drama and readings, and in respectful times of reflection and prayer. The significant trust of parents in the school's inclusive respect for faiths has ensured that no pupils are withdrawn from collective worship or RE.

Collective worship is carefully planned, recorded and evaluated. Pupils and staff from each class give their views on the impact of worship within the school's worship reflection books, the outcome of a development area arising from an external review of the school's worship and Christian ethos. These inform and enrich future worship plans. Senior leaders monitor and manage worship to ensure its content has respectful meaning for all present including those of other faiths than Christianity and those of no particular belief. There is a very clear worship focus on connecting each of the school's core Christian values to the teachings of Jesus in the Bible which ensures worship influences pupils' positive relationships and attitudes. The importance of these faith values for Muslims is also emphasised. A pupil explained, 'In our school we have Christian values from the Bible. They are just as important for Muslims because we know they are also in the Qu'ran.'

The pupils benefit from a wide range of leaders for worship who include senior staff, class teachers, the local parish priest and the pupils. Governors and the local clergy gain an overview of the faith life of the school through their attendance of collective worship. Parents and carers also enthusiastically take up invitations to join in the school worship. Each class has regular opportunities to prepare and lead collective worship. This gives all ages of pupils

the opportunity to share their faith and their RE learning. Older pupils take responsibility for preparing for daily worship and pupils enjoy assisting in adults' delivery of the worship. However there are no regular opportunities for pupils to independently plan and lead worship themselves. The worship leadership of the parish priest allows the pupils to gain an understanding of Anglican tradition. This is also emphasised by the Christian calendar of festivals that are celebrated by the school community. These major festivals provide opportunities for the clergy to develop understanding of the Christian teaching of the Holy Trinity in ways appropriate to the pupils' faiths. Pupils' visits to the local parish church and mosques enrich their understanding of places of worship and how they are influenced by the traditions and practices of each faith.

Prayer is important part of school life, with a 'tree of reflection' frequently used by pupils and staff, and areas within school set aside for private times of quiet prayer and reflection. During worship, pupils are keen to lead times of prayer and reflection with prayers stemming from both Anglican and Islamic traditions. The requirements of Muslim staff and pupils during the Islamic season of Ramadan are met by the school's provision for their prayer needs and well-being.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders promote a Christian vision throughout the school that ensures a welcoming, friendly and caring environment for all, irrespective of faith, culture or life-style. This creates an oasis environment that enriches and sustains all pupils, who are nurtured by the school's strong and effective Christian distinctiveness. It enables the diverse school family to work, learn and achieve together, in harmony and respect for each other. In the words of a senior leader, this school is a place where, 'Hope is encouraged and the love of God is lived.'

The school's strategic plans are well formulated and identify key drivers for on-going improvement. The outcomes are brought together in annual school development plans that successfully sustain the academic success of pupils and their nurture. This process is shared through wide consultation with stakeholders, including parents, carers and pupils. However within this scrutiny there is no formal evaluation of the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness in underpinning all aspects of the school's high academic standards and caring pupil nurture. The governing board informally gathers information on the school's Christian distinctiveness through regular governor visits to school. This assists the board to fulfil its role in supporting and challenging senior leaders to provide the best education possible for every pupil.

The Christian caring nature of the school community filters through from leaders, teachers and other staff to the pupils, who follow the example set by the adults. As a result, pupils are polite, well behaved and thoughtful, guided by effective behaviour support systems that emphasise the Christian concepts of forgiveness and restorative justice. Bullying is a very rare occurrence at the school, with any incidents of anti-social behaviour being brought to a swift conclusion by senior staff.

Senior leaders ensure that all staff benefit from ongoing professional development opportunities, which are linked to whole-school development areas. A significant and beneficial part of this development is carried out in conjunction with the staff of the local infant school which ensures a smooth continuity of educational provision for transferring pupils. The local authority plays a significant part in overseeing the development of the school whilst the school has strong beneficial links with the local diocese's education team.

The Christian distinctiveness of the school is welcomed by parents and carers of all faiths, who comment very favourably on how the care shown for each pupil's needs ensures that their children enjoy their school lives. The school also enhances adults' life opportunities by signposting parents towards appropriate adult training courses. The Christian traditions of the school are shared by pupils when they discuss the school's Christian values and their learning in RE at home. A Muslim parent explained. 'This is a school where all faith is respected and all can pray together each day. This must be the right message for our children to learn.'

SIAMS report July 2017 Ravensthorpe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School, Dewsbury WF13 3AS