

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wakefield St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Belgravia Road Wakefield WF1 3JP

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Leeds

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Wakefield

Date of inspection

19 October 2017

Date of last inspection

11 March 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided Primary 108255

Headteacher

Margaret Young

Inspector's name and number

Mark Edwards 383

School context

St John's is a one-form entry primary school located in the centre of Wakefield. The school works in a close partnership with six other local church schools. The majority of children are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic communities has increased significantly over the last five years and now stands at 43%. Many are from Eastern Europe and some are refugees. The number on roll is 212. The head teacher has been in place for 5 years. The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below national averages as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities. The school was last inspected under the OFSTED framework in place in 2012 and achieved a grade of good

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's chosen values which include endurance, reverence, trust, friendship and forgiveness permeate every aspect of school life.
- The strong leadership team sets and achieves high expectations for all the community.
- The supportive relationships between all members of the school community enables everyone to feel valued, nurtured and respected.
- Collective worship is valued and makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian ethos.
- The partnership with other local church schools impacts positively upon moderation and the sharing of good practice.
- Religious Education is creative, practical and motivates pupils to study the subject in more depth in later stages of education.
- The mutually beneficial relationship the school has with the local church and its community.

Areas to improve

- To engage a range of adult role models from the different faiths and communities represented in the school to support collective worship and Religious Education.
- To develop a succinct definition of spirituality that is easily understood by the whole community.

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

The school's chosen values permeate every aspect of school life. The promotion of these values including: endurance, reverence, trust, friendship and forgiveness impacts upon the school in such a way as to ensure good progress. Data shows that attainment and progress is in line with and in some areas significantly above national standards.

The school promotes high standards of respect and tolerance this is valued by parents. Pupils articulate well the concept of respect. They can cite biblical stories that back this up as well as give examples of how they demonstrate this in their daily actions.

Strong relationships underpin all that the school does. A core theme from discussions with parents is the family feel of the school. Parents value the fact that staff provide good role models that inspires pupils to be kind, caring and considerate.

Behaviour in and around school is exemplary. Children show compassion for each other in lessons and particularly in the playground. The school promotes the concept of forgiveness, which forms a key part of the behaviour policy. Pupils have a clear understanding of forgiveness and readily demonstrate this. The headteacher and staff go that extra mile to support pupils with behaviour and work closely in partnership with outside agencies and families to ensure support is of the highest standard.

Children recognise the importance of religious education (RE) and it plays a significant part in reinforcing the school's values.

Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith and their opportunities to develop an understanding of diversity is impressive. Pupils are able to articulate the benefits both St John's and their link school in Tanzania gain from working together. The school endeavours to support this aspect of its work through charitable fund raising. Pupils are very proud of their achievements and have a real say in how money raised is spent or donated.

Big question days, themed RE events, including spiritual installations throughout the year give pupils opportunities to reflect. Pupils appreciate these opportunities. From time to time staff have benefitted from such spiritual experiences and talk positively about the impact they have upon themselves and pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is given a high priority and held in high esteem by all pupils and staff. Pupil voice is clearly heard and acted upon through the work of the collective worship committee. Pupils enjoy taking a lead in delivering and evaluating collective worship.

The act of collective worship seen during the inspection demonstrates the embedded routines that enable pupils to demonstrate reverence and respect. High quality pupil interaction is a key strength of collective worship and pupils answer questions and take part with confidence. Singing is joyful and the action song linked to the core theme elicits clear enjoyment by all. Opportunities for reflection during collective worship highlights the importance placed upon spirituality.

Planning for collective worship is clearly structured and ensures the school's values and social, emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) are linked to collective worship themes. Biblical material is central with stories from both Old and New Testaments used. Pupils accurately understand the difference between the Old and New Testaments and understand the centrality of Jesus to the New Testament. Pupils have an extensive knowledge of different Bible stories and understand their key messages. Pupils can link these stories to the school's values and understand how these model the actions they take in their daily lives.

Governors are conscientious in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship, this is systematic and insightful. Governors demonstrate a clear enthusiasm for collective worship. This is demonstrated well by the fact that the chair of governors, as well as the local vicar, regularly contributes to the delivery of collective worship.

Pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of prayer and children are given appropriate opportunities to demonstrate the importance of prayer. Pupil's understanding of the Trinity as it pertains to the Christian faith is impressive and clearly understood. This is supported by the visual representations (Bible, cross and candle) at the start of reflective time in collective worship. Parents cite examples of pupils writing and using prayers in the home. The opportunities given for children to experience and explore the main Christian festivals in church enable the children to explain their significance with confidence.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education (RE) is enthusiastically led by two members of staff who are knowledgeable and have accessed diocesan training to develop the subject throughout the school. As a result, RE has an important status in the school and pupils speak of their enjoyment of RE lessons.

Teaching of RE is of a high standard as a result pupils are engaged and contribute to lessons well. This is reflected in parents' comments, with one citing an example of their child that comes home every week with detailed descriptions of what they have learnt. 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, role-play situations as well as opportunities to reflect and answer the "Big Questions" set in lessons. Lessons support the development of pupils' reflective skills well.

The school has developed an innovative reflective book that captures pupils' progression over time and travels with each class as they move through school, key RE lessons are presented in pictures and pupils' own comments. 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.

There is an appropriate emphasis upon Christianity and other world faiths and pupils demonstrate impressive understanding of the beliefs of their own and other cultures that they willingly share with each other.

Rigorous assessment procedures are in place. Current data shows pupils' achievements in RE is at the same standard and for some aspects are above standards found in other subjects in the school. Marking is impressive and is very much focussed upon reflecting the intended RE outcome rather than a focus upon literacy skills. The school emphasises that writing in RE books should be at the same standard as that in other subjects and the pupils are very proud of this achievement.

A partnership with other local schools ensures standards are peer reviewed and good practice shared. The school meets statutory requirements for the teaching of RE.

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

The school is led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher with integrity and a passion for its church identity. The standard of progress across the school is impressive especially in Religious education (RE). The school meets national standards in all areas and in some is significantly above. This is particularly impressive as in recent years the number of pupils from minority ethnic communities has significantly increased with many being refugee families and families from Eastern Europe. These pupils begin from a lower than national average starting points. They are nurtured and supported by a skilled team of support staff in order that they can access fully all that the school offers.

The school is explicit about its church distinctiveness this includes an impressive amount of information about the school's Christian characteristics on the school web site. Because all staff model the school's core values pupils' understanding of the school as a distinctively church school is impressive.

All staff contribute to evaluation and monitoring. The school has a well thought out development plan that places an emphasis upon developing further its Christian distinctiveness. Clear impact can be shown from listening to pupils and parents' views.

Areas for improvement have been addressed since the last inspection in particular, parent and pupil involvement in the monitoring and evaluation process. The outside reflective area, another focus area from the last inspection, is well developed, regularly used by pupils and supports pupils' spiritual development well.

Governors take an active role in school and have a realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They challenge the headteacher and ensure that their monitoring and evaluation of the school is reflected in the school development plan.

The school provides staff with continuous professional development opportunities that prepare them well for working in a church school. They access diocesan training and understand the need to develop the new syllabus and Understanding Christianity initiatives. This is well planned for in the school development plan. The school's innovative approach to succession planning for church school leadership enables the deputy headteacher to take on the role of headteacher one day a week. Governors are passionate about this approach and are able to cite clear examples of the success and long-term benefits of such an arrangement.

The effectiveness of the school's partnership with 6 local Church of England primary schools has brought benefits in both the moderating of standards as well as the sharing of good practice.

Parental engagement is high at the school and parents value the good communication the school has with them.

Parents feel comfortable coming into school and enjoy the opportunities the school provides for them to see their children in action. They value the work of staff and can cite many examples of staff going that extra mile to support their children and family.

There is a strong and mutually beneficial relationship between the school and church. Parents cite the valuable links that are made and in particular, value the coffee mornings at church when their children start school for the first

time.

The headteacher and senior leaders have developed a plan for RE and collective worship that meets statutory requirements and is creative in its approach.

SIAMS report October 2017 St John's C of E (Aided) Primary School Wakefield WFI 3JP