

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Dishforth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Grange Close, Dishforth YO7 3LN	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	York
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Date/s of inspection	12 June 2017
Date of last inspection	10 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 121487
Headteacher	Sue Brooks
Inspector's name and number	Judy Jones 797

School context

This small school has 91 children aged 3 to 11 from the village of Dishforth and surrounding hamlets in rural North Yorkshire. Almost all the children are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above average; the proportion entitled to additional support through pupil premium funding is below average. The school has grown significantly since the previous inspection. The headteacher was in post at the previous inspection. She is currently also executive head of another small school nearby.

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

- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and governors has established a Christian community in which children make excellent progress in their personal and academic development.
- Behaviour and relationships throughout the school are excellent because they are based on the school's Christian values of trust, compassion, perseverance and respect.
- Children are entrusted with a high level of responsibility, including unaided planning and presentation of many worship sessions which demonstrate children's depth of maturity and spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Extend and follow existing plans to develop the outside area, to provide additional stimulating teaching and reflecting areas.

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

The school's distinctively Christian character is evident in all it does. Children speak enthusiastically of their values and the way they were chosen by the whole school, and they know that success in their work and the happy ethos of the school are due largely to the way they put the values into practice. The headteacher and colleagues evaluate progress meticulously and provide support precisely where it is needed. As a result, standards of most are above average, and all make good progress. Children have very high standards of work and behaviour and know that if any of them do not live up to expectations there should be appropriate and fair consequences. As a result, they recognise the need for fairness and forgiveness and apply this to the way they persevere with their work and to the way they repair relationships after disagreements. Overall therefore behaviour is excellent, attendance is above average and exclusions unknown. Children are quick to see the link between the life and teachings of Jesus and their own lives and values so that they recognise the hidden meanings in parables. For example, they see how the story of the prodigal son illustrates God's love and forgiveness. In such a respectful and caring atmosphere, children are unusually mature and reflective as they share their thoughts and feelings and celebrate each others' differences. Children of other faiths and none are equally at ease, respecting and being respected for different views. As a result, children are very self-confident and teachers are able to give them a high degree of responsibility, such as having a say in the appointment of new teachers. There is less than average diversity of faith and culture in the immediate locality, so the school invites representatives from other faiths to visit and talk to children. Children are very interested and keen to question their visitors. In addition, the children are so sensitive to the value of diversity and the importance of respect for differences that they are well prepared for a living in more diverse communities as they grow older. Religious education (RE) supports the school ethos very well by introducing children to other world religions as well as extending their knowledge of Christianity. Children say they enjoy the lessons because teachers make them fun and challenge them to think and ask questions.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is at the heart of the day for the whole school. Planning is thoughtfully organised to give children a variety of kinds of worship, including class worship, whole school worship and singing based worship. The most significant feature is the high level of involvement by the children of all ages. They have a strong sense of ownership and derive great satisfaction from planning and presenting worship in many different formats on their own. Adults provide some materials such as Roots and Fruits and artefacts or craft materials but the children decide for themselves the format and carry out preparation in their playtimes or lunch breaks. For example, children sometimes use computers for simple animations of their own devising. The other children find that stories such as Daniel in the lions' den approachable and absorbing when presented in this way. Worship is centred on Bible stories and on the life of Jesus and reinforces the school's values systematically. The school hall is small and parents cannot easily be included, but the school holds festival services in a church a few miles away, sharing the service with the school there. Parents are invited and numbers attending have increased to 'standing room only' since the initiative started a few years ago. Parents describe these services as 'inspiring.' The local incumbent supports the school in many ways, including taking the services in the church and worship in school. She is very popular with the school and helps children to follow aspects of the Anglican tradition such as ecclesiastical colours and responses. Collective worship supports children's knowledge of the Trinity through symbols such as candles, so that children speak knowledgeably of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer is central to worship and children say the Lord's Prayer and other formal prayers regularly. Children talk with pride about the school prayer which they wrote. They also write their own prayers for many occasions. Children are alert to the quality of worship because they monitor sessions, taking it in turns to complete a formal evaluation sheet. They complete this frankly and their comments taken into account in future planning.

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

Leadership is outstanding because it is based on a clear vision that is supported by rigorous evaluation and on the values the children chose of trust, perseverance, respect and compassion. This excellent evaluation contributes to standards that are well above average for most children and all children make good progress. The school is exceptionally inclusive and the headteacher is very skilful in adapting resources to the needs of individuals. Where specialised help is required the leadership provides appropriate staff training and the school is highly successful with a range of needs. Leadership has dealt effectively with all the issues raised in the previous inspection. One outcome is that the governing body is now closely involved in evaluating the school's distinctive Christian character and in strategic planning for the future. The leadership recognises that a school which is doing well cannot afford to stand still. Governors are diligent in monitoring and questioning the leadership through the standing agenda items on

their meetings. They visit the school frequently and their written evidence informs later discussions. They also ensure the school meets statutory requirements for collective worship and RE. The headteacher is committed to securing leadership for church schools in future and provides staff training for new teachers and for experienced ones moving into new roles. The leadership has strong links with the diocese of York and, with the help of the incumbent, has developed a fruitful partnership with the parish even though the church building is in another village. The school buildings are small and inconvenient, but the careful behaviour of the children enables all the spaces to be used to the full. The outside area is large and some is developed well. For example, an area has been planted with young trees that will eventually form part of a forest school project. Not all the space is in use at present and the school intends to develop it further as a learning and teaching environment.

SIAMS report June 2017 Dishforth CE VC Primary School YO7 3LN