

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

### Wistow Parochial Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Hill Wistow Selby YO8 3UU

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>York</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Date of inspection	16 June 2017
Date of last inspection	25 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 121596
Headteacher	Sarah Langridge
Inspector's name and number	Judy Jones 797

#### School context

Wistow is a smaller than average school with 140 pupils aged 4 to 11 on roll, serving a rural area north of Selby. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion entitled to additional support through pupil premium funding. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with most pupils speaking English at home. The school population has grown significantly since the previous inspection. The headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection. The local parish church has not had an incumbent for the last three years.

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

- The vision of the headteacher and the governors of the school as a Christian community is apparent in all the school does. This contributes to pupils' good social and academic progress, whatever their individual needs.
- The school's values of honesty, resilience, forgiveness, respect are closely linked to Christian teaching and at the heart of the life of the school.
- Pupils' respect for each other and for those who teach them is fundamental to their thinking and actions in this church school. As a result, they accept and value differences in faiths and customs of people different from themselves.

#### Areas to improve

- Give pupils more autonomy when leading and presenting collective worship so that they increase the depth to which they consider and share their ideas about the place of Christian values in their school lives.
- Increase the monitoring of religious education (RE) in order to establish the extent to which it contributes to the school's Christian character.

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

The school's four values of honesty, resilience, forgiveness, respect were chosen by the pupils, after extensive discussion with adults, soon after the previous inspection. All agree that their adoption has made a significant difference to school life. Pupils say 'we all get along better' and that 'having values makes people nicer.' In conversation pupils frequently comment on how caring the school is for everyone. This respectful ethos means that Wistow is a school where people of all ages try to understand each other and take account of different points of view. Consequently, relationships amongst throughout the school are excellent. Occasional differences are sorted out quickly and pupils feel safe and happy. As a result, they are eager to come to school and work hard, so they make good progress in lessons and in their personal development is outstanding. Attendance is good and exclusions very rare and only used for exceptional circumstances. Spiritual development is excellent. It goes hand in hand with learning because pupils see their values in the context of Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus. For example, they relate the story of The Good Samaritan, or occasions when Jesus showed forgiveness, to their own lives. Pupils are accustomed to reflecting on disturbing events in a national or international context and often come to exceptionally mature judgements. For example, in considering acts of violence in the wider world they raised the question of the place of prayer. Pupils asked whether 'if we pray for the victims we should we pray for the man who did it since he was killed too.' Religious education makes an important contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other religions. Pupils enjoy RE lessons and talk enthusiastically about what they know of other faiths, such as Islam and Hinduism. The subject is taught in a variety of ways that challenge and excites them. Pupils enjoy recording their work through imaginative artwork as well as through conventional written accounts. They are very knowledgeable about the teachings of Jesus, but less secure about events in his life. There are a few pupils in the school with different faiths or denominations and they enjoy talking about their customs and traditions because the other pupils are so open-minded and interested. The school tries to widen pupils' direct experience of other faiths. To this end, there is a longstanding link with a school in Zambia and the school is also supporting the education of a boy in Rwanda through fundraising by the pupils.

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

The school has revised and improved planning for collective worship since the previous inspection. As a result, there is a clear purpose to involve pupils in planning and leading some sessions. There is now evaluation by pupils and governors of the quality of worship. From this year, a group of volunteers, called worship leaders, have been planning and presenting worship. This is so successful that many more have volunteered for next year. Pupils enjoy this involvement and some would like to take on more responsibility through having greater autonomy. The school has correctly identified this is an area for development so pupils can share their ideas about the importance of Christian values in daily life. The pupils in charge are confident and self-possessed, and well supported by the respectful ethos of the school. The school welcomes a number of visitors to lead worship. Some are regular and some occasional. The headteacher has been resourceful in covering the absence of an incumbent over several years, through the support of clergy at Selby Abbey. Worship reinforces pupils' understanding of the link between their values and Christian teaching. The idea of the Trinity is reinforced through Christian symbols and Anglican prayers and responses. Pupils are encouraged to understand the Trinity and to show their understanding of these symbols by making up their own visualisations. They are keen to explain their ideas. For example, they describe the Trinity as like the three parts of an apple (skin, flesh and seeds) that make one. They readily suggest other original examples. Music is a strong feature of all worship and pupils enjoy singing, and sometimes playing instruments. Reflection too is integral to worship and pupils are well used to this and to prayer. They know The Lord's Prayer and the school prayer, written by former Year 6 pupils. They are used to writing their own prayers, in response to their own private experiences or more widely shared events.

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

The headteacher has a clearly expressed vision of the school as a Christian community that welcomes those of all faiths and none. It is shared by the governors, staff and parents and demonstrated by the children. The vision is lived out in the school because it is supported by effective evaluation, and driven by enthusiasm and an inclusive ethos. Pupils say 'it is a lovely school and we wouldn't change anything.' The establishment of the school's values has done much to reinforce the vision, and to raise standards of work and behaviour. Pupils can explain the importance of 'resilience' and what it means in their lives. Consequently they cooperate, persevere and reach high standards in their work. Leadership of RE is effective and innovative. Governors are deeply committed to the school as a church school. They have a key role in strategic planning and evaluation and they ensure the school meets all its statutory duties including those related to worship and RE. Extending the monitoring of RE has been

identified as an important aspect of the school's ongoing evaluation. This is because it makes a very good contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character. The school maintains an excellent relationship with parents and looks for ways to extend and increase parents' involvement. For example, the headteacher and governors carried out a survey of parents, focussing on RE and the nature of the school as a church school. This showed that parents did not know much about the themes used in worship. As a result, information about current themes is now included in the regular newsletters to parents. In spite of being without an incumbent, and until recently without a foundation governor, the school has successfully maintained and increased its distinctiveness as a Christian community. This is largely due to the enthusiasm and commitment of the headteacher and governors, who seize opportunities, such as a pilgrimage to local places of worship, to extend pupils' knowledge of the church in their locality. The leadership sees professional development as fundamental to the school's future development and is effective in providing excellent specialised training to individuals for RE and more widely when appropriate. For example, the headteacher and RE leader have embraced the Church of England project 'Understanding Christianity,' with great enthusiasm and training for the whole staff is imminent. Links with the local church are very strong and have been successfully maintained during the interregnum. There is standing room only when the school uses the church building for festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, and parents and friends are invited. Support and training from the diocese is fundamental to the school's development as a church school.

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