

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

### **Little Weighton Rowley Church of England Primary School**

White Gap Road, Little Weighton, Cottingham, Hull, HU20 3XE

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>York</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Date/s of inspection	10 November 2017
Date of last inspection	November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 117990
Headteacher	Susie Varley
Inspector's name and number	Nigel Castledine 652

#### **School context**

This Church of England school is much smaller than average with 48 full-time pupils on roll, situated in a semi-rural area close to the Hull conurbation. Most pupils come from within the village community, with a small percentage from the surrounding district. The school is linked with St Peter's church in Rowley.

Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils with additional needs is higher than average whilst the number of disadvantaged pupils is lower than national average. The school is the main local provider for Foundation stage education, which includes two-year old Early Years provision.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Weighton Rowley as a Church of England school are good**

- Enriched by inclusive worship, Christian distinctiveness is at the heart of this school's life, sustaining pupils' progress, achievement and well-being.
- Insightful Christian leadership of the school perceives every pupil as an individual and valued child of God, each requiring carefully-matched academic and nurture provision that ensures the best possible outcomes.
- Respectful and caring relationships between all members of the school community are underpinned by the school's permeating Christian values that positively influence all aspects of school life.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Explore wider opportunities to deepen pupils' spiritual development within worship, class and extra-curricular activities that will increase and heighten pupils' experiences of spirituality, awe and wonder.
- Widen existing good practice in the evaluation of collective worship by enabling more members of the school community to feedback their opinions, in order to inform its future planning and development.
- Formalise the outcomes of governor evaluation of the school's Christian distinctiveness on all aspects of school life, to ensure that school documentation incorporates this important aspect of their leadership role.
- Extend an invitation to appropriate members of other Christian traditions to lead school worship and by doing so, give pupils opportunities to join in worship using their differing rituals and liturgy.

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

In this small, caring school, each pupil's unique worth is welcomed and celebrated within in its friendly, family atmosphere. At the centre of the school's faith ethos is the Christian belief that every child is known and loved by God, and accordingly of infinite individual value. Therefore, all pupils are supported to achieve their best within school life. Potential blocks to learning are identified by the staff team who match additional support to meet individual pupil's needs. The school shows its Christian outreach in accepting and working successfully with pupils who have found school life and learning difficult in other settings. A parent commented, 'My child's issues have been eased sensitively and positively by the staff. They have transformed my child's outlook on school.' Regular and punctual attendance is considered to be very important. Accordingly, the school works with families to raise attendance for the minority of pupils whose low attendance becomes a cause for concern. Pupils enjoy school life as they are excited and stimulated by the challenges and successes they meet.

The school celebrates and engages fully with its Christian values of endurance, creation, courage, hope, joy, thankfulness, service, humility, justice and trust. All are integral to school policy and practice, and are emphasised on the school website and within key information regularly sent home. Weekly celebration worship emphasises their importance with certificates presented to pupils who have lived out a particular Christian value in school. A school councillor observed, 'Our values make a big difference. They remind us how and why we should be caring people.'

There is a strong tradition of mutually supportive staff teamwork at the school. This provides a positive role model of respectful care and thoughtful friendship so that pupils display excellent attitudes within school life. Collaborative working between different aged pupils within classes is very successful with the older often taking appropriate responsibility for the younger. An older pupil explained, 'We all care about each other so nobody gets left out. We rely on each other like a big family.' Christian service to others is also evident in pupils' willingness to help or taking on responsibilities such as being a school councillor. Any rare incidents of bullying or anti-social behaviour are dealt with quickly and compassionately. This living out of the Christian values of care, concern, kindness and trust is supported by a friendship award for which pupils can nominate a 'good friend'.

The school supports the development of acceptance and respect for all through its Christian values, so that pupils grow in understanding of different faith traditions and life-styles. The school has an active link with an Anglican school in Kenya which enhances pupils' understanding of multicultural world-wide Christianity. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is delivered through cross-curricular approaches, augmented by the wide range of additional activities. However the school recognises the need to increase pupils' experiences of awe and wonder, and opportunities for personal spiritual encounters.

Religious education (RE) is taught according to the East Riding agreed syllabus. It is led by the subject co-ordinator who has an excellent knowledge of her subject area. Because of this, the school ensures that RE enhances pupils' engagement in collective worship, widens their perceptions of belief and enriches their understanding of Christian values. It also ensures pupils gain a respectful understanding of the contrasting beliefs and faith customs of other major world faiths.

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

Daily worship brings the whole school community together in inclusive, diverse liturgy that ranges from calm, quiet reflection to joyful, exuberant celebration. Its themes support the living-out of Christian values by following the teachings of Jesus. Accordingly, worship is closely linked to Bible teachings. The school also ensures that worship meets the needs of the ability levels of all pupils. Worship includes the offering of pupils' successes and achievements to God in a weekly celebration. Due regard is also given to the beliefs and sacred writings of other major world faiths.

Worship is led by the headteacher, class teachers and members of the local Anglican clergy team. Worship leadership does not currently include members of differing Christian traditions, but the school rightly regards this as a beneficial future development. Pupil participation in planning and leading worship regularly involves each class. Pupils are keen to join in enthusiastically with the singing, discussion, readings, drama and prayers. A pupil stated, 'I really enjoy helping to lead our worship because I can share my ideas about God and Jesus.' A worship 'working wall' in the hall records the opinions and suggestions of the school on its themes. However, a wider range of evaluation from all stakeholders is needed to inform future worship planning more fully.

Collective worship includes invitations to join in moments of calm response, reflection and prayer. These include the school and the Lord's prayers alongside prayers and responses from Anglican church tradition. Prayer and reflection during the day is encouraged by a range of quiet spaces in school and by each classroom's engaging reflective area. These have a cross, prayers and a varied choice of attractive reflection aids. Pupils' own choices of prayers are used for the lunchtime grace and the end of day prayer. Pupils are confident in sharing their beliefs

about God and Jesus Christ and their age-appropriate understanding of the Christian doctrine of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Pupils experience elements of Anglican worship tradition in the use of a faith linked focal point of the cross and a lit candle on the worship table. This is covered with a coloured cloth to remind those present of the current season within the liturgical year. The Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter are occasions when parents and families are invited to share the school's celebratory worship in St Peter's church, which is a significant walking distance from the school. At Christmas, the pupils invite the wider community to share in their celebrations with carols and coffee in an informal gathering. Guests at this event include residents from the nearby care home for the elderly. Pupils also take their worship out to these residents, as was observed on Remembrance day. As an integral part of this worship, each resident was respectfully guided by a pupil to make a poppy.

The school harvest festival for pupils and families also takes place in school. This festival provides an opportunity for pupils to demonstrate their Christian stewardship and service in delivering flowers to elderly local residents and donating to their local food bank. Christian compassion is clear in the pupils' concern for the needs of others globally, as seen in the school's charitable involvement in Christian Aid week and the pupil's practical support for their linked Kenyan school.

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

Senior leaders, including governors, ensure that the school has a shared Christian vision that is clearly articulated, shared with all stakeholders and implemented consistently. A recent review of the impact of the school's Christian ethos has shown that school life continues to be sustained by the pervasive Christian distinctiveness. Pupils' actions demonstrate that this Christian vision extends from school into their homes. One child explained, 'When I upset my brother, I know that God wants us to be friends again as soon as possible so I need to say sorry.'

School evaluation, in which all leaders including governors are involved, carefully identifies the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors use school pupil progress and achievement data and evaluation outcomes to hold leaders to account, as well as offering their support. This monitoring process includes scrutiny of how well pupil's educational development and welfare is supported by the school's Christian ethos. All pupils achieve at least at expected levels of progress and often better, so that by the end of Year 6 almost all are achieving at or above national expectations. However, because of the low number of pupils in some year groups, comparisons with national figures can show wide fluctuations at the end of each Key Stage.

The headteacher and governors ensure that RE and worship are both ably led. Governors and senior staff keep up to date with the changing requirements for Church of England schools through attendance at diocesan conferences. The key messages from these events are disseminated at meetings of the governing board. Both the governing board and the senior leadership team are proactive in succession-planning for key roles within school. All staff are offered appropriate opportunities for ongoing professional development, including helpful collaborations with other schools in the locality.

Links with the local parish church and its congregation are mutually beneficial, with the church seeing the school as an integral part of its mission of service within the local community. Accordingly, school life is a regular agenda item at church council meetings. Despite several recent interregnums, local clergy involvement in school for worship and pastoral visits has remained constant. This has ensured that joint worship at the major festivals of the Anglican year continue to link school and church. School outreach is also enhanced by other special events and opportunities for pupils to be involved and of service within in the wider life of the community.

Parents and carers engage well with the school, supporting their children's education at home and by responding positively to invitations to attend school events. They appreciate the advantages of the small size of their children's school, one mother commenting, 'One major benefit of our small school is the targeted support for all the pupils as individuals.' Parents are also very supportive of the school's Christian ethos, one observing, 'The school's Christian values transform the children's views and actions into thoughtful and caring behaviour.'