

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Kirkbampton Church of England Primary School

Kirkbampton, Carlisle, Cumbria. CA5 6HX

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Carlisle
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of inspection	15 March 2018
Date of last inspection	21 February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 112252
Headteacher	Andrea Armstrong
Inspector's name and number	Caronne Field 866

School context

Kirkbampton Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school situated in the village of Kirkbampton, to the west of Carlisle. The 105 pupils, along with 15 children in nursery provision are predominantly of White British heritage. The school draws a significant number of pupils (60%) from areas of high deprivation outside the catchment area. There are fewer pupils than usual (6%) with special educational needs and disabilities. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (2%) is significantly below the national average. The headteacher has been in post since January 2018.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirkbampton as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher's compassionate Christian leadership and vision inspires change and is bringing significant improvements to all aspects of school life.
- Children's understanding of Christian values influences their exemplary behaviour and attitudes to life.
- Relevant and engaging worship motivates and challenges pupils. It makes an important contribution to their spiritual development and wellbeing.
- The supportive partnership with the local church contributes effectively to the school's Christian distinctiveness and the spiritual growth of children.

Areas to improve

- Involve the whole school community in a review of the school's distinctive Christian vision so that there is a shared understanding of the school's purpose.
- Ensure that effective use is made of training opportunities for the development of governors so that all governors fully understand their role in a church school.
- Establish effective local, national and global links with other schools and communities. This is to further develop children's understanding of cultural diversity and global issues.

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

Christian values guide all aspects of school life. They provide children with a firm foundation for learning and play. This means even the youngest children know Bible stories such as Jesus feeds the Five Thousand. Some children can explain how this story shows God's love. Older pupils recognise how the teachings of Jesus can inspire people to take action in the service of others. They relate this to the life of Mother Theresa, explaining how she showed humility in her work. Pupils link their own care for others to the example of Jesus. This contributes to relationships which are exemplary and reflect the Christian character of the school. New approaches to learning promote independence, collaboration and active pupil involvement. As a result, standards and progress across the school are improving rapidly. Children feel valued, enjoy coming to school and take great pride in their achievements.

The school's Christian character makes a good impact on spiritual development. Questions of meaning and purpose are explored through a wide range of creative experiences. For example, children of all ages felt inspired to make a personal response to the Biblical theme of 'A new Heaven and a new Earth'. Art work around the school reflects the quality and depth of pupils' understanding. Pupils also speak with enthusiasm about worship events with other schools, such as the 'Moving Mountains' project and 'Sing Up' at Carlisle Cathedral.

Children enjoy and value their work in Religious Education (RE). This is because teachers provide a wide range of learning experiences that challenge pupils to think deeply. RE makes an important contribution to the school's Christian character and to spiritual development. Christian values are thoughtfully woven through the RE curriculum. Pupils learn about different faiths and gain understanding of beliefs that are different from their own. This has a positive impact on their attitudes to diverse religions and cultures. One pupil explained, 'It's important to know about people of other faiths because we can learn so much from each other.' They apply their learning in RE to their own lives. However, wider links with other schools and faith communities are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure that children have a secure understanding of diverse cultures.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship makes a significant impact on pupils' thinking and relationships. It is firmly based upon Christian teachings and values. Pupils enjoy the rich variety of worship experiences provided through music, action songs, drama and prayer. A wide range of leadership styles and settings enhance worship. Reflection plays an important part in worship. For instance, a snowy day provided a memorable opportunity to think about, 'How hope helps us to live now.' Melting snowballs representing different-sized problems allowed children to reflect upon how hope can help us to let go of worries and move forward. Pupils linked this to practical ways in which they can show hope in their own lives. Younger children particularly enjoy sharing worship within their class 'family'. Since the last inspection, the role of pupils in planning and leading worship has developed. This enhances their understanding of the nature and purpose of worship as well as their leadership skills.

Prayer and reflection support spiritual development. Children understand the value of prayer because of the different experiences of prayer they encounter in worship and in the wider life of the school. One Year 2 pupil explained how he liked to use the Lord's prayer on his iPad at home. Children respond to opportunities to write their own personal prayers at other times in the school day. The vicar makes an effective contribution to children's thinking about 'big questions' They put their questions in a special box and he then supports and guides children to reflect upon each question during worship. Worship also enables children to develop a sound understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Parents are warmly welcomed at weekly celebration worship. They speak highly of these times saying, 'They give the school community time to celebrate and worship together.' The close partnership with the local church and other ecumenical groups enriches worship. Children say that they enjoy attending special services and festivals in church throughout the church's year. Many families also enjoy 'Sunday at 4pm' worship in school led by the ecumenical team. Consequently, pupils experience different styles and approaches to worship that enable them to appreciate a range of Christian traditions.

Highly effective evaluation of worship by staff, governors and pupils contributes to future planning. Class worship books and a whole-school portfolio effectively record children's spiritual journeys. Evidence from governors' monitoring reports enables staff to learn from and share good practice. This has led to improvements in the delivery and impact of worship.

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

The headteacher provides strong and compassionate Christian leadership. She leads by example, modelling relationships which reflect Christian values. Her leadership and vision inspire all aspects of church school improvement. In the short time since her appointment she has established a learning community where everyone feels valued and decisions are shared. Parents are full of praise for the new headteacher and the changes she and her staff team have made to all aspects of school life. One parent described a recent parents' evening as 'the best ever' because children were 'actively involved in the learning conversation'. Staff and governors work together with renewed purpose. They are excited about taking the school forward in new ways.

Leaders and governors regularly review the school's mission and aims. However, they rightly identify the need to engage the whole school community in this process so that there is a shared vision for the school as a church school. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to secure improvement. Governors are able to contribute knowledgeably to self-evaluation because they share in pupils' work and worship through regular monitoring visits. The school's effective response to the last SIAS inspection has secured improvement.

Support and training from the diocese and good links with local schools have enabled staff and governors to develop many aspects of their practice as a church school. However, some governors are new to their roles and have not yet had chance to attend training regarding their roles as leaders of a church school. The headteacher's collaborative approach to the leadership of collective worship and RE effectively develops staff skills and expertise. It ensures planning is coherent and the vision is shared. Staff also appreciate the contribution made by the vicar. In addition to leading worship, he provides much valued support for curriculum activities and prayer. All staff have recently attended diocesan training for a new approach to teaching Christianity. This has made a positive impact on teaching and learning across the school. Both RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

Parents are strongly supportive of the school. They appreciate the changes that the headteacher has introduced and say they always feel 'comfortable and welcome' in school. They are particularly encouraged by the way in which the school is reaching out to the local and wider community. The newly formed school council have begun to put their own plans into action. They are enjoying their new responsibilities because they are motivated to help others.

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