



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Spennithorne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Spennithorne Leyburn North Yorkshire DL8 5PR
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese/Methodist District	Diocese of Leeds
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Satisfactory
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Name of multi-academy trust/ federation	n/a
Date of inspection	4 th October 2016
Date of last inspection	7 th May 2013
School's unique reference number	121517
Headteacher	Lindsay Evans
Inspector's name and number	Mark Edwards 837

School context

Spennithorne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Spennithorne and serves a surrounding cluster of small villages and hamlets. The school roll has fallen over consecutive years to 31 pupils. Pupils come from predominantly White British families. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the number of children with special educational needs. There is currently an interregnum at the linked church of St Michael and All Angels. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2012.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Spennithorne Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- A clear emphasis upon the school's core chosen values that are understood by pupils who are able to apply them to their daily actions.
- The headteacher's clear vision coupled with strong leadership of religious education (RE) and collective worship that ensures they make a positive contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character.
- Collective worship that is valued by all members of the school community that enables pupils to take an active role in its development and organisation.
- Pupils' good behaviour, linked in particular to the value of friendship, that promotes positive relationships and a sense of caring for each other.
- Good progress of pupils including those with special educational needs where standards over time have been maintained at national levels.

Areas to improve

- To develop the governors' ability to challenge, evaluate and articulate the impact of the school's work on all aspects of its Christian distinctiveness.
- To develop learning opportunities to broaden pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and Christianity as a multicultural world faith.
- To seek out opportunities to extend the contribution to collective worship of leaders from different Christian traditions and the local community.

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

The school ensures a high standard of educational achievement for its pupils and recent national test results are in line or better than national averages. With small numbers of pupils statistical analysis is difficult; the school has developed case studies that demonstrate the support pupils have to ensure the good academic progress of each individual.

In addressing an area for development from the last inspection the school has developed its core Christian values of hope, friendship, trust and endurance. These are embedded in the daily routines and pupils can articulate how these impact upon their daily lives. One pupil commented that, "Jesus was a friend to all and we need to do that in school and in our houses".

Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard. The school promotes individual responsibility well and as a result pupils are confident. They show a great deal of care for each other. This is particularly evident during playtimes when older pupils take care of younger ones, both parents and children stating they are 'one big family'.

The school has developed, with the support of the recent incumbent, a clear statement of spirituality. This document provides a guide that staff use to inform their work and daily interactions. It is by using this document that staff ensure pupils' spirituality is nurtured and developed. Pupils identify their spirituality with a visual representation depicted as a "God shaped hole" through which God can work in their lives.

Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith and their opportunities to develop an understanding of diversity is less developed as the school is situated in a predominantly monocultural area. Pupils understand the need to serve others and through charitable fund raising and pupils articulate well why they need to support others less well off than themselves.

Staff and parents state that relationships, respect and trust are strong in the school. In particular staff feel well supported and parents feel that communication is a strength of the school. The school has developed collaborative partnerships with other local schools. A recent collaborative project with another church school has resulted in some artwork based upon pictures of saints that is now displayed on the outside of the building.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The headteacher's strong leadership of collective worship ensures it is given a high priority and held in high esteem by all pupils. Pupils are given opportunities to plan and lead collective worship. Their enthusiasm for leading worship is clear through their animated discussions. The act of collective worship seen during the inspection demonstrates well-embedded routines; confident singing, a high level of engagement, and an eagerness to take part in interactive aspects further support this. Opportunities for reflection during collective worship highlights the importance placed upon spirituality. Planning is clearly structured and ensures the school's values are linked to collective worship and biblical material. Pupils' own planning and delivery of collective worship also has a strong values element. Monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher has developed the school's understanding of the delivery of collective worship, although the school would benefit from the inclusion of more stakeholders including governors, parents and pupils in this aspect of their work. This range of views could help to inform strategic development.

Pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of prayer. Children are given appropriate opportunities to demonstrate the importance of prayer through the creation of the school's collection of pupil generated prayer books. Pupils understand that Bible stories play an important part in their collective worship and are beginning to demonstrate how the meaning of some of the stories have relevance to their own actions. What is less developed in the school's provision for collective worship is pupil's understanding of the Trinity as it pertains to the Christian faith.

The school regularly holds acts of collective worship at the local church and this has been maintained throughout the interregnum. The school recognises that there are limited opportunities for other church leaders or adults to support collective worship. Pupils have a developing understanding of the liturgy that is common to both school and church services they attend which demonstrates an understanding of the Anglican traditions. Parents value and understand the importance of the link with the local church and join the school for special festivals such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas. At a recent Harvest service new reception pupils were presented with a cross and parents cite how these are prized and valued possessions in their homes.

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

Effective initiatives to improve the school's church school distinctiveness have been put in place by the headteacher since the last inspection. These include greater pupil participation in the planning and delivery of collective worship, a focus upon each unique individual and the development of a systematic approach to monitoring. What is less developed is the governing body's ability to challenge and articulate the impact of the work the school has done.

Staff and governors show dedication to promoting high standards in personal welfare. Parents say that the school nurtures their children's talents and pupils state that they feel safe and supported. Behaviour is good and pupils show respect to each other and adults in school.

The headteacher and the school community have worked together to improve the understanding of what Christian distinctiveness looks like. They have established a clear set of values that is explicitly promoted, understood and reflected upon by pupils. This addresses an area of development from the last inspection.

The headteacher has developed a plan for religious education (RE) and collective worship that meets statutory requirements and is creative in its approach. Leadership of RE and collective worship is the responsibility of the headteacher, who demonstrates skill and shows understanding of how to lead this aspect of the school's work effectively. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with another small church school, for which the head has recently taken on the leadership, has brought mutual benefits as pupils can interact with a larger number of pupils. Joint art projects, joint school studies of local churches and school residential visits have strengthened the school's ability to deliver their creative approach to RE.

The headteacher ensures that the small number of staff working in the school all take an active part in promoting the Christian character of the school. Staff are aware of their responsibilities with regard to promoting the distinctive ethos of the school. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has developed a self-evaluation strategy that develops the school's Christian distinctiveness. However not all stakeholders have been involved and the school recognises that this is an area that needs further development.

Within the school's termly professional development programme there is evidence that an element of Christian distinctiveness has a focus each term. In addition the school staff have accessed diocesan courses to enhance their skills and knowledge. Parental engagement in school is positive and parents value the good communication the school has with them. Parents feel comfortable approaching and visiting school and cite that the school staff address any concerns they have quickly.

SIAMS report October 2016 Spennithorne Church of England (VC) Primary School. DL8 5PR.