

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Church Walk CE Primary School

Church Walk, Ulverston, Cumbria. LA12 7EN

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Carlisle
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Cumbria
Name of multi-academy trust / federation [delete as appropriate]	
Date/s of inspection	17 November 2016
Date of last inspection	13 September 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	112361
Headteacher	Susan Davies
Inspector's name and number	Jo Williams 863

School context

This is a smaller than average primary school situated in a small town on the Furness peninsula. There have been significant changes since the last inspection. In September 2013 the school converted from an infant school to become a full primary school with mixed age classes. This academic year is the first year that the school has had pupils in every year group. A larger than average number of pupils has special educational needs. There is a private nursery on the site that feeds into the school. The new headteacher, who has taught in the school for many years, was appointed to her current post two years ago.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Church Walk CE School as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values are core to the work of the school. These values are explicit and they are embraced by the wider school community, with pupils taking particular ownership of their individual class value.
- There are highly effective relationships across the school community, as a result pupils feel safe and valued as individuals.
- The school's strong leadership is anchored by a clear Christian vision which empowers a cohesive staff team to provide effective support for every child.
- The school fosters mutually beneficial partnerships with the wider community

Areas to improve

- To develop greater use of thinking skills such as enquiry, interpretation and reflection to enable pupils to acquire a deeper understanding of the themes and concepts underpinning Religious Education (RE).
- To deepen pupils' spirituality by increasing the opportunities for them to plan and lead worship independently.

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

The school motto, 'teach children how they should live and they will remember it all their lives', is based on a biblical verse from Proverbs. From this parents gave examples of how the Christian character of the school has a positive impact on pupils' academic standards commenting, 'they make it possible' and described a warmth where children 'blossom in everything'. The school's highly inclusive approach ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Staff referred to the school's Christian values of trust and perseverance as giving pupils the confidence to take risks in their class work. Pupils explained that the Christian character of the school made them feel safer and more able to talk to the teachers. There are highly effective relationships in the school between pupils and also between adults and pupils. Throughout the inspection the school was consistently compared to being like a family. There is an embedded culture of caring for one another and an example of this is the active buddy system where older pupils provide support for younger pupils. Likewise, when asked about bullying, a pupil responded that 'Jesus didn't bully and we want to be like Jesus'. The school has many examples of how pupils have a well-developed understanding of diversity based on mutual respect. Level one of the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award was achieved with the school council taking a lead. Another example is the school's commitment to Fairtrade which has included a recent visit from a Belize cocoa farmer. This also supported pupils' understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith. After a lesson on creation one infant went home and told his mum that 'God made everyone equal and we need to be kind'. Religious Education is underpinned by the school's Christian values and has a significant impact on pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. When studying World War II in years 5 and 6 key links were made in RE lessons between the class's Christian value of justice and the injustice of the holocaust.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Staff described collective worship as 'setting the tone for the day' and recognised its impact on the school community in that it 'underpins the school's ethos'. Pupils enjoy sharing in the different elements of collective worship. There is a well-planned cycle of worship based on the school's Christian values. Clergy expertise supports effective planning and delivery as well as half termly services in the parish church. The outline plan for the year ensures that school worship is distinctively Christian and embraces key Christian festivals. A variety of visitors, such as 'Jester for Jesus' and 'Open the Book', enrich pupils' experience of worship. This breadth of approach has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual development. Prayer plays a key role in the daily life of the school. Pupils described how prayer helped them, for instance if they were struggling with their school work. One pupil explained that 'when you talk to God you get closer to Him.' Pupils' understanding of church customs is deepened by the use of traditional prayers such as 'Day by Day' and the Lord's Prayer. Collective worship also supports pupils' initial understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On occasions the school council and staff provide verbal feedback to those leading worship. Currently there is not a routine system for pupils to share their views on worship activities and therefore pupil voice has a limited impact on planning of future development. Pupils take an active role in worship such as drama, reading and spontaneous prayer however pupils do not have frequent opportunities to plan and lead worship independently.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards in Religious Education are good and the subject has a high profile within the school. Classroom displays reflect the current RE topics that pupils are studying. Pupils' achievement in the subject is in line with that of other curriculum areas. The standard of work is evaluated by staff alongside work in other curriculum areas. Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. The quality of teaching in RE is at least good. Lessons are inclusive with appropriate support in place to ensure that all pupils access the RE curriculum effectively. The school has introduced creative approaches to the teaching of RE, such as 'Philosophy for Children' and this provides scope for thoughtful discussion. As yet the use of skills such as enquiry, interpretation and reflection are not embedded sufficiently to have a significant impact on standards in the subject. The RE curriculum is predominantly Christian but pupils also study Judaism and Buddhism, benefiting from links with the local Buddhist community based in Ulverston. Meaningful connections are made in RE lessons to the school's Christian values. When considering images of Jesus as the Prince of Peace, Years 5 and 6 made links with the class's Christian value of justice. Clergy provide support for RE lessons. The vicar led a visit to the church to explore baptism with younger pupils. There is effective leadership of RE through a routine cycle of monitoring activities. The subject leader has developed assessment criteria for each unit to support teachers in assessing pupils' attainment. Staff training has a positive impact on RE provision, such as the introduction of Godly play to early years' lessons. The subject leader passes on the latest information regarding initiatives in the subject to support sustained curriculum development.

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

The school's leadership provides a clear Christian vision which is lived out on a daily basis. Leaders use the annual staff and governors' 'vision and values' evening to reaffirm the Christian character of the school. Parents described the school as nurturing and a governor explained that 'children are at the centre of everything and value is placed on each child'. This approach is rooted in the Christian character of the school and has a positive impact on each child's individual achievements. The school's Christian values have a direct influence on pupils' wellbeing. The weekly awards assembly celebrates those pupils who have modelled Christian values. New staff commented on the particularly caring atmosphere within the school and how pupils know that they are listened to. There is a wide range of self-evaluation activities which support the school leadership in developing effective long term strategic plans. A range of whole school monitoring activities provide leadership with a clear picture of pupil progress. School data is rigorously tracked to ensure effective monitoring of standards. These feed into whole school long term improvement planning. This has been particularly pertinent in the school's success in its effective transition from an infant to a primary school. The headteacher provides opportunities for staff to develop key skills that support leadership in a church school. The governors are committed to growing future leaders resulting in the current headteacher being nurtured and prepared for the role from within the school. Current staff also undertake a variety of training to support them in their current post and for future roles within church schools. The school has a good number of effective partnerships with the wider community that are mutually beneficial. The church has assigned a parishioner to develop greater links with the school and a member of staff commented that 'pupils feel comfortable in church due to activities in school'. A local park's sustainability is reliant on the community using it. The school holds a variety of sporting activities there and park volunteers have visited Church Walk to help pupils with class gardening projects at both sites. The school visits the local hospice to share in a variety of activities and staff commented on how these visits extend pupils' understanding of a difficult reality but also support their spiritual development through a deepening empathy and compassion. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report November 2016 Church Walk CE Primary School, Church Walk, Ulverston, Cumbria. LA12 7EN