

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Husthwaite Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Low Street, Husthwaite, North Yorkshire, YO61 4QA

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	York
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Date of inspection	9 November 2017
Date of last inspection	September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 121502
Executive Principal	Rebecca Bainbridge
Inspector's name and number	Judy Jones 797

School context

This is a very small school with 62 pupils aged 3 -11, taught in three classes. The school has a geographically larger catchment area than average, and pupils come from a number of nearby villages. A slightly higher than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs/disabilities and the proportion attracting pupil premium funding is above average. Since the previous inspection the school has become federated with a larger school nearby. Both are led by the executive headteacher who was head of Husthwaite at the previous inspection.

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

- The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the school and have established a strong ethos based on values of Respect, Challenge, Enjoyment, Caring and Sharing, Community and Christian Roots, each linked to a passage in the Bible, so that pupils are happy, make good progress, and behave exceptionally well.
- The school has very close links with the local church and community that enrich the curriculum so that pupils' spiritual development and well-being is good.
- Pupils are deeply committed to the school's Christian values and very clear about the connection between these values and biblical teaching.

Areas to improve

- Broaden pupils' experience of difference and diversity by enabling them to meet and question people from other faiths and cultures.
- Extend planning and leading worship to younger pupils, who are very keen to share this experience.
- Formalise governors' observations of church school features so that details of their observations can inform decisions about future planning.

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

The school has a strong Christian ethos based on its chosen Christian values such as 'caring and sharing' and 'respect' and 'challenge'. Each value is clearly related to a passage in the Bible so pupils know and say that their values are founded on Christian teachings. For example, 'caring and sharing' is linked to 1 Peter 5:7 'Give all your cares to God for he cares for you.' Parents say children talk at home about their values, and about what they learned in religious education (RE) and worship, such as the Ten Commandments. Pupils say the school is good because everyone tries to live with Christian values in their daily lives. The values are displayed throughout the school and consistently referred to by all staff. Pupils make good progress in lessons and develop well socially in such an encouraging environment. Relationships throughout the school are good and pupils are emphatic that bullying hardly exists and are convinced that it is the school's Christian values that prevent bullying. One aspect of 'caring and sharing' is modelled by the excellent way the school looks after and encourages pupils with particular needs. Consequently, these pupils develop well socially and make progress at least in line with what is expected. Children enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Exclusions are rare and there have been none in the last eighteen months. Spiritual development is good and supported by the school's emphasis on its Christian values and by good RE teaching. Pupils are encouraged to think about the meanings behind bible stories, for example through questions starting, 'I wonder if...' Their responses to 'big questions' illustrate their growing maturity as they move up the school. For example, younger children say that Jonah prayed in the whale's stomach because he was afraid of being in the dark, but older ones understand the part that being sorry and wanting forgiveness played in Jonah's feelings. Pupils learn about the beliefs and customs of different faiths in their religious education (RE) lessons and some have visited a mosque. However, there are not enough occasions to meet and talk to people from backgrounds very different from their own. RE makes an important contribution to the school's distinctively Christian character. Pupils learn well and remember the lessons because they involve a lot of active learning such as role play.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a central part of the school day and children enjoy the variety and the lively way worship is presented. Worship is consistently well planned throughout the year and all staff attend and take turns in leading worship. This reinforces the importance of worship to pupils. The school enjoys strong support from the local vicar, who is also a Foundation Governor and who sometimes brings others from the community to present bible stories through the 'Open the Book' project. From pupils' comments it is clear that their good knowledge of bible stories and the life of Jesus come in part from what they learn in collective worship. Pupils know and say the modern version of the Lord's Prayer. They like the idea that the wording has been made 'more up to date' and therefore more appropriate for them than the 'old fashioned one.' Prayer and reflection are always part of worship, so pupils are familiar with the format and are confident about saying their own prayers and reflecting on the topics discussed. Anglican traditions underpin worship. For example, pupils know that different colours are used in church worship throughout the church year and they remember this because it is their responsibility to change the colours in their reflection areas in their classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to use these areas to think more about what they have heard in worship and to add their own prayers. Many pupils see this as an important part of their school life. They particularly like and use a cross made for the school that has spaces for them to put their own prayers. A typical comment is that prayer is talking to God, and pupils' prayers bear this out. They are generally simple and conversational expressions of what they are grateful for or sorry about. Knowledge of church customs is reinforced by visits to the local church for the services and festivals that are significant in the church calendar. Pupils are familiar with the idea of the Trinity and relate it to the three candles they light at the start of worship. Music and songs with actions are used well to illustrate themes, and pupils respond with enthusiasm when singing. The school has recently involved some Year 6 pupils in planning and presenting worship and this has been a big success since pupils of all ages talk enthusiastically about the presentation that included a video made by the Year 6 pupils. There is scope for more worship planned and led by pupils and they are keen to play a bigger part.

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

The Headteacher and governors, particularly the Foundation Governors, have a clear and far-sighted vision for the school as a Christian community and planning for this is based on accurately evaluating the impact of initiatives. Consequently, standards of achievement are at least as high as expected, and behaviour and relationships are excellent. Although the headteacher spends half her time in the partner school, systems are sufficiently robust for Hushwaite to run smoothly even in her absence. Good links with the diocese help to develop the roles of teachers, for example in supporting the leadership of RE and worship. In spite of significant staff changes recently, the ethos is so well established that the school has capacity to develop and improve. Professional development for teachers to use a new RE syllabus and follow diocesan initiatives is also preparing them to play a significant part in

the leadership of church schools in the future. Issues raised at the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. Christian values and Anglican traditions are now embedded in school life. Consequently, the distinctiveness of the school as a church school has improved since the previous inspection. Partnerships with the church, at local and diocesan levels are strong and enrich children's daily experience. With the support of the leadership and the diocese, the new leader of RE and worship has made an effective start, both in organising the subject and in supporting colleagues. Governors, including the incumbent, have a good appreciation of the essential features of church schools and are keen to see the school improve. Governors know the school well and monitor progress, including the church school aspect, through frequent reports at governors' meetings and through observations. When they visit the school to carry out learning walks or observe lessons or worship they report back orally to meetings but do not currently write reports of visits. This means that though governing body meetings are frequent and governors' knowledge of the school is good, there is a risk they may overlook details of observations. Governors ensure the school meets statutory requirements for RE and worship. Parents recognise the distinctively Christian nature of the school and are pleased with the impact of the school's values on their children's development.

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