

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

<b>St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School</b>	Askham Richard York YO23 3PD
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>York</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	York
Date/s of inspection	13 October 2016
Date of last inspection	September 2011
School's unique reference number	121547
Headteacher	Steve Jones (acting)
Inspector's name and number	Alan Thornsby 137

### School context

St. Mary's is a smaller than average sized primary school with 120 pupils on roll arranged into four classes. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those who speak English as a second language are well below national averages. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs are also below national figures. The current acting headteacher (formerly the well established deputy headteacher) has been in post since the beginning of this term.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Mary's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The distinctive character is seen in the tangible Christian ethos that is embedded in the practice and policy of the school. These impact on all aspects of school life and drive the academic and personal development of pupils.
- The link between school and church makes a significant contribution to the worshipping life and spiritual development of the school.
- The leadership and management fully understand how the vision and values of the school inform the distinctive Christian character. This creates an extended sense of family within a caring Christian community.

### Areas to improve

- Give greater recognition to the consistent impact of Christian values in displays throughout the school to continually celebrate the securely established Christian ethos.
- Provide pupils with greater involvement in the planning, delivery and evaluation of acts of worship so that they grow in their spiritual lives.

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

The school has an exceptional ethos that results from the securely founded Christian values of compassion, friendship, koinonia and trust. These have been chosen by the whole of the school community as being the key values that drive the school and are linked to their Biblical origins. Newsletters share the current value and Bible verse with parents. The school web site shares a wider range of Christian values and their Biblical backgrounds. Consequently, Christian values are understood and lived out by everyone in daily life. This ensures that all pupils make good progress on their spiritual journey. However, although values are reflected in some displays, the school does not consistently proclaim and celebrate its Christian foundation in all displays in school. Staff constantly refer to Christian values in their teaching and provide a role model that pupils mirror. Behaviour, relationships and attitudes are exemplary. They create a sense of extended family in which each child is valued as a unique individual. Pupils are confident, articulate and polite. They have high levels of self-esteem. Younger pupils have a Key Stage 2 partner to support and care for them in work and play situations. This forges strong friendships in and out of school. A broad and creative curriculum, including forest school and times for reflection in lessons, supports the academic and personal development of pupils. Monitoring and tracking procedures ensure that pupils make progress, as well as identifying the need for intervention and support. As a result, the progress and achievement of pupils often exceeds national expectations. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a strength because of the impact of Christian values. The SMSC policy identifies links between Christian values and a range of activities to develop these. Spiritual experiences are also identified in other curriculum areas, such as maths. Religious education (RE) has a high profile as part of the distinctive Christian character of the school. Staff have introduced a new scheme of work with great enthusiasm. Lessons ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and understand the significance of events such as the Eucharist, baptism and weddings. Pupils have a good awareness of other faiths through effective teaching supplemented by visits and visitors. These enable pupils to understand and respect the nature of global faiths, commenting, 'it is not what you look like or how you speak. What matters is on the inside of a person and how they treat each other'. Pupils show Christian values in action through serving others less fortunate. They support a number of local, national and global charities, including the York food bank and Operation Christmas Child.

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

Collective worship is a key feature of school life to explore the range of Christian values related to everyday life. Themes are linked to the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) as well as to the Bible and events from other faiths in school. These enable everyone to relate the impact of worship themes to the vision and ethos and to their behaviour and attitudes. Children recognise Christian values as 'helping us to do the right thing and follow the example of Jesus'. The effective policy reinforces Anglican worship, suggesting a range of resources to support the delivery of worship. Anglican worship is reinforced in planning, identifying the elements of gathering, engaging, responding and sending. These features of worship are also part of the worship monitoring form and ensure effective monitoring by staff and foundation governors. The views of pupils are collected in different ways, including pupils' reflections in the 'our worship journey' book. The monitoring shows the effectiveness of extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, the Bible and their spiritual development. It enables staff and governors to identify next steps for development, including giving pupils more experience of planning, leading and evaluating worship. Although pupils can talk about the life of Jesus, they are at an early stage of understanding the Trinity. Pupils experience a range of worship leaders, including staff, clergy from local churches and the York schools and Youth Trust (Yo-Yo). In addition, the input of the foundation governor leading 'Open the Book' assembly give pupils experience of a range of worship formats. Pupils arrive for worship with their partners and create a reverent atmosphere. They are engaged by lively delivery, such as the using the format of a well-known quiz show and are keen to participate. Worship includes the lighting of a candle, described by pupils as 'showing Jesus is the light of the world and the way to go'. Pupils have a good understanding of the value of prayer, including The Lord's Prayer and the school prayer. They see prayer as times to talk to God 'to ask for help to be a better person'. The importance of prayer is recognised by the request 'Lord in your mercy' and the response 'hear our prayer'. St. Mary's Church is used for festival services as well as termly worship for older pupils.

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

The headteacher, governors and staff have an excellent understanding of how the vision and values of the school inform the distinctive Christian character. This is extremely well articulated by all and lived out by everyone. This ensures that every aspect of the life of the school and every decision made, is to further the academic and personal development of each individual, with Christian values at the core. Foundation governors are active and have a high profile in the life of the school. They ensure that RE and worship meet statutory requirements to maintain that 'the distinctive Christian character shines out in all we do'. For example, every policy has an appropriate Bible verse as an introduction. Foundation governors meet regularly with the headteacher and report to the full governing body. This ensures that everyone is aware of developments. Diocesan training has increased governors' knowledge and understanding of the impact of the distinctive Christian character. Consequently, they challenge as well as contribute to self-evaluation as a church school. As critical friends, link governors meet termly with subject leaders. This informs rigorous monitoring of the impact of Christian values, the effectiveness as a church school and performance data about the school. The views of parents and pupils also inform monitoring. The school has addressed the development points from the previous inspection. Current self-evaluation is accurate and the action plans show developments in the three areas of inspection. Governors have a good understanding of succession planning, with foundation governors setting out the qualities needed by a substantive headteacher to successfully lead an ambitious school. Staff are valued and supported by a commitment to on-going professional development through training. All staff recognise the impact of Christian values on their teaching and the learning of pupils. They are proud of the impact of the ethos that ensures community support for each other especially in difficult times. Parents are rightly proud of the school and 'its family like feel where everyone knows each other.' They recognise how their children are secure and confident because of the sense of belonging to a church school. The school has strong partnerships with the local churches and community. These enable the school to play a full role in its community in events such as carols round the Christmas tree, 'Messy church' and contributing to the parish magazine. Links with wider communities result from involvement with Christian Aid and World Vision.

SIAMS report October 2016 St Mary's CE VC Primary School Askham Richard YO23 3PD