

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

### Hackthorn Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Hackthorn, Lincoln, LN2 3PF	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lincoln</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Date of inspection	9 October 2017
Date of last inspection	12 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary – voluntary controlled - I20572
Headteacher	Karen Appleby
Inspector's name and number	John Gibbs - 818

#### School context

Hackthorn is a much smaller than average sized primary school with 59 pupils on roll in two key stage class groups. The headteacher was appointed in 2014. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Most of the pupils are from the village of Hackthorn and nearby villages but an increasing number travel from further afield. The percentage of pupil premium children, those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and disabilities, is below the national average. A new incumbent has been appointed to the parish.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hackthorn Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values support and have a major impact on the school's approach to relationships, the children's welfare and approaches to learning.
- Collective worship delivers vital occasions for children to be still and reflect and sets the tone for the school day.
- Leadership and management ensure that the continuing development of the Christian ethos has a high priority as an essential part of school development planning.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that the religious education (RE) scheme of work is updated in the light of latest national and diocesan guidelines.
- Develop the collective worship council's role so that the children become more effective in planning delivering and evaluating school worship.

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

The start of a process to identify a set of core values in 2014 enabled the school to reflect on what it meant to be a church school in the local community and involved all stakeholder groups in its creation. The resulting “Hackthorn Way” is a set of values which have given the Christian ethos of the school added meaning and purpose. It is how the school has lived out these values which make it an outstanding church school. The values have been integrated into the life of the school so that they impact on children’s welfare as well as linking with their attitudes to learning and behaviour. Children’s behaviour is exceptional and by the time they leave the school at the end of key stage 2 their academic progress exceeds national expectations. Trust, community and perseverance are examples of three of the values which are embedded in the life of the school.

The school has worked hard to ensure these values relate to Christian values, the children have an impressive understanding of them and are able to explain how the values have roots in Christianity through teaching in collective worship and how they reinforce their achievements and impact on their daily lives. For example, one child described how the value of perseverance enabled her to improve at gymnastics. The school has also worked hard to ensure that links are made in the curriculum to these Christian values. Specific examples include the link to topics in the creative curriculum and through children’s personal, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils have excellent opportunities to explore and express their views on these values as part of their learning and the quality of reflection makes an important contribution to the development of their spirituality.

Relationships between all members of the school community are impressive. Love and honesty are at the heart of how adults and children treat one another. Children listen carefully to the views of others and talk confidently about their own ideas of faith and belief. Parents enthuse about the church school ethos and enjoy the fact that children come home and talk about the Christian dimension of the school. One parent said, ‘children feel valued in this school, the staff punch above their weight and the school’s values really reinforce the Christian faith both in and out of school.’

Religious education gives excellent support to the school’s Christian character. Through creative teaching approaches, RE engages and challenges children, making a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are given opportunities to pray and reflect during the school day which enables their personal spirituality to develop. Examples included writing prayers for the school prayer box and also prayer ribbons tied up by the children in the outside reflection area. The impact of the above results in a highly developed interpretation of spirituality across the whole school community where pupils are extremely confident in expressing their viewpoint in a variety of ways.

Through teaching about other faiths RE leads the way in developing very positive attitudes to diversity and difference. A programme of visits to religious communities and places of worship has been developed which has enabled the children to gain an understanding of different faiths and cultures.

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

Worship is central to school life. It is valued by the whole school community. Children enjoy it because themes are relevant and they are given time to reflect and make meaning for themselves. In this way it supports their spiritual development well. Music plays a significant part in collective worship and the pupils sing superbly with a high level of enthusiasm. The worship is distinctively Christian in character and begins with the lighting of a candle representing Jesus as ‘the light of the world.’ Worship is well led and includes the widespread use of Bible stories that deliver themes clearly related to the school’s values. Careful planning places an emphasis on the major festivals of the church year as well expanding on key Christian beliefs and the school’s values. Weekly celebration assembly is open to all parents who attend regularly in large numbers.

There is a wide range of worship styles led by numerous contributors including staff, local clergy, the Bishop’s Visitor and representatives of outside groups such as The Joy Foundation. These are enjoyed by the children and widen their awareness of different Christian traditions in worship and the seasons of the church’s year. Similarly, the celebration of festivals across the church’s year enhances the worship programme by developing an understanding of Anglican tradition and practice.

Pupils have knowledge of the Trinity and talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit with a fair degree of understanding. There is a strong relationship between school and local church which is appreciated by children and parents who value the opportunities to attend school acts of worship in church celebrating major Christian festivals on a regular basis.

Pupils’ attitude to prayer is respectful and positive. They know a variety of prayers and make regular contributions in acts of worship. There is a prayer box in the school to which the children contribute on a regular basis and this

enables them to relate their own thoughts and feelings to life both in and out of school. Collective worship is effectively monitored by foundation governors with the headteacher. Children also have some opportunities to be involved in worship and members of the newly established Worship Council are active in making suggestions for developing worship though their involvement is at an early stage of development. Increasing opportunities for the pupils to engage in evaluating, planning and leading in worship would increase their engagement and ensure consistent quality of collective worship.

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

The headteacher and governors have a strong commitment to the developing Christian ethos of the school. The Christian vision and values of the school are evident in 'The Hackthorn Way' and are embedded through the prospectus, newsletter and website. The governors are well informed and hold the school to account at the same time providing strong support. External data confirms that the standards are in line with or exceed national averages in all core areas with all pupils flourishing as a result.

Self-evaluation as a church school is robust and an integral part of the school improvement cycle. The headteacher and governors consequently have a sound handle on their strategic role in continual development as a church school. One consequence of this is a prioritisation of staff development. Through this training, the leadership is aware of the need to ensure that the RE curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that it complies with the latest national and diocesan requirements.

All staff are supportive of the school ethos providing inspiration for the high standards of behaviour. There are mutually supportive links with the local parish church and local community as well as strong and productive links with the diocese and neighbouring schools. Relationships with parents are excellent and they appreciate the approachability of the head teacher and staff who listen to their concerns. The children say that they have an effective voice in the school, that the School Council and Worship Council are listened to and their comments taken seriously.

Effective governors and a strong relationship with the local parish considerably enhance the spiritual dimension of the school. A member of staff stated, 'The distinctive Christian ethos of this school has a major effect on behaviour and achievement and brings out the best in all the children.' This was fully endorsed by parents and governors. Collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements and are well led and managed. They contribute effectively to pupils' understanding of Christian values. The areas for improvement of the previous inspection have been met in full.

SIAMS Report October 2017 Hackthorn CE Primary School, Hackthorn, Lincoln, LN2 3PF