

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Canon Popham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary & Nursery School

Church Balk, Edenthorpe, Doncaster, S Yorks. DN3 2PP

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Sheffield
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Doncaster
Date of inspection	15 February 2017
Date of last inspection	November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	VA Primary 106768
Headteacher	Alison Navas
Inspector's name and number	Kerry Palmer (60)

School context

Canon Popham is an average sized primary school built some 40 years ago to serve a suburban area of the town. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. An average proportion have special needs or disabilities. The number considered disadvantaged, with additional funded support, is below average. It has an established HT and a re-constituted governing body. The school is in a joint building with the parish Church of the Good Shepherd, part of the Beakon Churches Mission Fellowship. The current vicar has been in post for eight months.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Canon Popham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary & Nursery School as a Church of England school are good

- The professional and highly motivated headteacher and leadership team who promote a broad, exciting and rigorous education for every child driven by clearly stated Christian values.
- Rich, Christ centred religious education (RE) which stimulates strong spiritual, moral, cultural and social education (SMCS).
- A well informed and engaged governing body who celebrate the school's church links.
- A mutually beneficial partnership with the parish promotes a Christian perspective, community enrichment and children's understanding of Anglican tradition and practice.

Areas to improve

- Integrate the self-evaluation and development planning of Christian distinctiveness into whole school practice and headteacher reports so that it is evidently central to the school's vision.
- Develop further opportunities for children to plan, lead and evaluate worship on a regular basis to promote ownership and enrich engagement.

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

It is clearly evident that the Christian values which are at the heart of this school promote an excellent education. Children are exceptionally positive about learning. They display enthusiasm, confidence and maturity. All are obviously happy at school. They say they feel safe and cared for. For example, one parent spoke of the bereavement group established following a sad loss in the school family. Consequently, attendance levels are about

national expectations. Perseverance and resilience result in data which illustrates that pupil progress is consistently good and Key Stage 2 outcomes exceed national expectations; levels of mastery continue to rise. The needs of children of all abilities are well served. Focussed support ensured that the small number of disadvantaged children make good progress; a range of enrichment activities challenge the more able. The fact that this is a church school is not only evident in the multitude of displays, cross-curricular links to scripture, prayers and artefacts around the school. It shows in relationships and sensitivity. A grandad talked of the wonderful atmosphere at the end of a day when children's achievements were celebrated with prayers of thanks. He spoke of policy put into practice. The school's Christian character strongly promotes SMSC growth. Children have many opportunities to experience aspects of God's creation with awe and wonder. The need to raise awareness of the wider world is recognised. There are well planned curriculum and worship links to other cultures and faiths but the school recognises that there is currently insufficient opportunity for children to directly relate to our diverse society. Recognition of Christianity as a world-wide church is also too limited. Compassion and empathy for the less fortunate is promoted through a range of charitable activities. For example, the school council organised presentations to select the school's charity of the year. All children flourish in a climate of mutual respect.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Creative approaches, incorporating school values for life, are coordinated by the headteacher who leads a relevant and effective collective worship programme. Whilst generally referred to as assembly children recognise that worship focusses on God. Christian values are at its heart. Some children say that the messages positively affect their behaviour and relationships at school and beyond. For example, a post Valentine's Day worship stressed love as action, a verb rather than a noun, illustrated by God's gift of Jesus. A child told by a parent to, 'hit back,' at home responded, 'no, that's not kind!'. Another family discussion about 'Where do babies come from', elicited the response, 'They come from God'. Children take advantage of opportunities to pray, reflect and ponder 'Big Questions'. They know the Lord's Prayer and use of prayer stations in each classroom is of growing in significance. A variety of lively worship songs, often with actions, are sung joyfully. Children take a major part in leading festival services, such as harvest, Christmas and Easter, and occasional class presentations. However, despite being a focus for development following the last inspection, there continues to be insufficient opportunity for them to contribute actively or plan and lead worship on a regular basis. Worship takes place in the parish church, part of the same building, at least weekly, using some liturgical forms. This along with RE lessons and regular input from the parish help children's growing knowledge of Anglican tradition. The variety of worship approaches is enriched by a number of local churches. This includes the popular Pastor Les, from the Live Church, who also attracts children to 'Treasure Kids', local after school Christian Clubs. A parent recalled her son's moving response to the theme of Christian trust. 'Open the Book', from the local Methodist Church also broadens children's Bible knowledge. This is further enhanced, following a diocesan initiative, by use of a weekly, classroom based Gospel reading followed by discussion and reflection. Children recognise the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit but have little understanding of what each aspect means to Christians.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Creative and exciting learning strategies, combined with effective subject leadership and a professional staff team ensures inspirational teaching. Effective evaluation strategies, plus feedback from pupils and staff, inform relevant RE development plans. Implementation of development targets is carefully monitored. Evidence from work sampling and observation confirms the school's judgement that teaching is always at least good with outstanding features. Marking strategies enhance understanding and end of unit 'I wonder?' assessments move learning on. Planning reflects clear understanding of subject material, delivered with pace and challenge. Work is well pitched and children can explain what they have learnt. RE is popular; it contributes much to the school's Christian character and powerfully promotes SMSC development. Bible based teaching predominates, as expected in a church school, but appropriate teaching about other faiths is incorporated in a comprehensive and well-structured programme of study. 'We have our values, Hindus have dharma', one child said. The well-established enquiry approach successfully promotes higher order learning skills using age appropriate strategies that address a variety of learning styles. For example, small children in the foundation unit have an animated discussion about the qualities and feelings surrounding people they love whilst Year One considered Jesus a friend to all, regardless of their failings. RE teaching has developed reflective and articulate learners who can relate aspects of faith to their own lives. Year Six are able to discuss 'Big Questions' such as their vision of eternity and the Christian perspective. Speaking of heaven. One spoke of 'where you go when your sins are forgiven'. Children have a clear understanding of the special nature of Jesus, 'He's the Son of God, the only one who's perfect', said one. 'God thought the world needed to be saved, so he sent us Jesus', responded another.

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

The dedication, energy and professional skills of the headteacher has sustained significant development of Canon Popham as a church school. She has nurtured a strong and effective staff team who work together to promote the school's Christian values in all aspects of school life. The school's 'Values for Life' arose from a joint consultation between staff, children and governors. Professional development for all staff is recognised as vital. Staff are encouraged to take initiatives and additional responsibility. Good use is made of diocesan support including headteacher briefings and leadership networks. The latest initiative sees the introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' project. A close liaison within the local pyramid of schools and church school networks facilitates mutual support and sharing of expertise. Staff and governors are united in the pursuit of excellence. This is illustrated by the school's rigorous evaluation of effectiveness and the setting of aspirational and focussed targets. However, the development of Christian distinctiveness does not feature in core school development plans or as a standard feature of headteacher reports to governors. A review of governance strategies, focussing on skills and experience, has re-energised an effective body who strongly support the school's church foundation. They know the school well and recognise the need for specific governor links to RE and worship. Two experienced foundation governors, longstanding friends of the school, are a much valued link with the parish community. Their activities include welcoming parents and children into church for 'Bookworm' reading together sessions, before school, three mornings a week. The excellent, mutually beneficial, partnership with the parish is flourishing, particularly since the new priest arrived. He gives the development of worship with families and children a high priority and is becoming a pastoral friend to the school community. Messy Church sessions, promoted through school, are growing rapidly. The church is packed with families and friends for school festival services such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Parents are very happy with the Christian values promoted by the school and have confidence in school leaders. 'Mrs Navas is always in the playground, we can chat about anything', said one, 'Any small problems are sorted straight away', commented another. The partnership is emphasised by home learning rather than homework. There is excellent communication with regular use of text messages. There is an active PTA who do much to promote social links and raise significant funds for school developments through activities such as discos, fashion shows and Christmas Fair. The school fully meets statutory requirements for collective worship and RE and the potential for further positive development is excellent.

SIAMS report February 2017 Canon Popham CofE (VA) Primary & Nursery School Doncaster DN3 2PP