

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

### Thurgoland Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Halifax Road  
Thurgoland  
Sheffield  
S35 7AL

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Sheffield</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Barnsley
Date of inspection	15 March 2018
Date of last inspection	14 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	106626
Headteacher	Suzanne Brown
Inspector's name and number	Louise Patterson (310)

#### School context

The school is an average sized primary school with 206 pupils currently on roll. The headteacher, who has been in post for four years, is currently supported by two acting assistant head teachers. She taught in the school prior to her appointment as headteacher. Pupils are split between seven classes. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average but the percentage of SEND pupils in receipt of additional funding is above average. Attendance is above average. The school is within walking distance of the church.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Thurgoland Church of England (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The school has a very distinctive Christian ethos based on a clearly defined Christian vision which is understood by all stakeholders. This is securely embedded in all aspects of the school and impacts very positively on the school's provision and outcomes for the pupils.
- The strong Christian vision and leadership of the headteacher and governing body, who consistently review and revise the Christian elements of the school, is a strength.
- Excellent relationships based on Christian values that lead to a very positive and supportive learning environment which enables all to succeed at their own level.
- Pupils are confident, extremely well-behaved and developing into well rounded individuals in the knowledge that they are loved by God.

#### Areas to improve

- To involve pupils even more in the leading and planning of worship and include the impact on pupils, staff and visitors when monitoring collective worship.
- Extend the range of multicultural opportunities within school, utilising visits and visitors, to enable pupils to widen their cultural horizons.
- Monitor the recently introduced Understanding Christianity resource to clearly understand the impact on the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

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

The outstanding Christian nature of the school is very well demonstrated through the ethos, the treatment of every child as an individual and the quality of the relationships. The school motto of 'learning together in faith and joy' is being lived out on a day to day basis, enabling all pupils to achieve their full potential as well rounded, confident and spiritually aware individuals. Pupils are offered a very wide range of enrichment opportunities and responsibilities both within the classroom and elsewhere which is enabling and encouraging them to be caring, reflective and questioning in a safe and understanding environment. The excellent utilisation of the outdoor learning space is having a very positive impact. The distinctive areas for reflection and quiet are clearly well used, weather permitting. The emphasis on God's wonderful creation is a central idea when focusing on the outdoors and nature. The results of this and the use of prayer and reflective areas in classrooms is evident in the outstanding quality of care and respect for each other and the natural world. Pupils are able to articulate what it means for them to go to a church school, saying, 'being a church school means a lot to us', 'it helps us to think about God and Jesus' and 'we follow Christian values which reflect in our lives'. A parent commented that her child, 'often talked about the distinctiveness of the school at home'.

Data outcomes are generally very good. This is a tribute to, not only on the very good teaching in the school, but the support and nurture given to all pupils. Both teachers' and teaching assistants' are totally committed to the school as a caring, inclusive establishment rooted firmly in Christian values. Though there are a significant proportion of pupils with some kind of additional need there is still the push for both personal and academic achievement. The emphasis on the development of every individual child means that pupils are developing into well-educated, rounded, and morally grounded individuals through the priority placed on their progress but also their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is some development of global awareness through both charity work undertaken and the religious education (RE) within the school but this is not fully developed nor is the impact on pupils carefully monitored.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and extremely well cared for, which contributes to the above average attendance. There are very high expectations for behaviour, care and love, with staff acting as excellent role models. All staff consistently demonstrate that they care for pupils in the school both in the classroom and outside. This results in pupils who are very well behaved and have a very positive attitude towards school. They engage readily with the learning process and are keen to come to school.

Religious education is making an outstanding contribution to the school as a Christian community. It is not only enabling pupils to have a much deeper understanding of Christianity as a world religion, but also other world faiths. Pupils are being very well equipped to question and make informed decisions about faith. The subject is making a significant contribution to the spiritual growth of pupils which is demonstrated in their ability to articulate difficult religious concepts such as the Trinity and write their own thought provoking prayers. The subject is extremely well led and managed by the co-ordinator who is clearly passionate about the subject and the positive impact it is having on both the children and the school as a religious community.

There is a very mutually beneficial relationship with the local parish, with many contacts both formal and informal. The school makes full and positive use of the links with other church schools in the local area. This is resulting in pupils who have an understanding of the nature of the relationship between school and the wider Christian community. The school is an outstandingly distinctive church school with pupils and staff benefitting from the impact of the Christian values underpinning every aspect of school life.

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

Worship occupies a central place in the life of the school and it reflects the school's Christian ethos. It is enabling both staff and pupils to develop a sense of community and Christian fellowship, with all staff in attendance. There are opportunities for the development of the spiritual dimension within worship with singing, prayer and periods of quiet reflection. The impact of these opportunities is evident in the way pupils speak openly about this aspect of school life. The opportunities to take part in elements of worship are taken up with enthusiasm, with lots of volunteers who clearly have a good background knowledge and understanding. It is clear that pupils take their involvement in worship seriously, as the pupils observed acting out the Last Supper performed confidently and without scripts. One pupil commented that, 'I like to act out stories'. Pupils generally have an understanding that the teachings of Jesus and Christian values which are discussed in worship are to be lived out through their behaviour towards others and the choices they make. The impact of this is pupils who are considerate of others and make positive choices about their behaviour. These values and teachings are regularly reinforced through the appropriate use of Bible stories. Pupils and staff are fully engaged in worship and clearly enjoy the experience. Prayer is a regular feature of the school day, with pupils having an understanding of what prayer is. Prayer is used within worship and also at other times. Pupils seem to enjoy opportunities to write their own prayers. School worship is clearly well planned and thoughtfully delivery. Pupils are not regularly involved in the planning stages of the worship and, when

asked, said that they would welcome the opportunity and think they have the knowledge and understanding necessary. Children enjoy regular worship led by local clergy and gain insight into Anglican practice. A pupil commented that they would really miss Canon Keith if he wasn't there. They also said how much they enjoy going to church because 'it gives us times to reflect' and 'we enjoy it, everyone is friendly'. Major festivals are celebrated in church, which pupils enjoy and gain a lot from. This reciprocal relationship has grown into a strength of the school in recent years. This approach is widening the Christian experience for both pupils and staff.

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

The committed Christian leadership and management of the headteacher and governors is making a significant contribution to the success of this outstanding church school. There is comprehensive and insightful vision, values and priorities document which highlights the importance placed on the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The self-evaluation of the distinctively Christian nature of the school is accurate, if a little cautious, demonstrating that the leadership of the school has a clear understanding of where the school is and how it can continue to improve. The Christian distinctiveness is very effectively promoted through the vision and website which gives a clear view that the Christian foundation is central to the life of the school. There is a link to the local church page which reinforces the strong ties. Parents speak very highly of the school as a church school. They said such things as, 'there is a real emphasis on the nurture of the whole child', 'it teaches the basic values to use to get on in life' and 'I breathed a sigh of relief when I came through the door...you feel it as soon as you walk in'. They say that they are kept very well informed about their children and that they appreciate the 'open door' policy that the school has in place. The parents spoke very highly of the headteacher and her readiness to talk about issues and her availability on the yard at the start and end of the day. The committed and enthusiastic staff team fully support the vision and ethos of the school and there is a real sense of them working outstandingly well together to enhance the excellent support being given to every child. Pupils are encouraged to take on appropriate responsibilities from quite an early age which is helping them to develop a genuine sense of community, conscientiousness and duty. A parent commented, 'there is a valuing of uniqueness' and 'everyone really looks out for each other'. Pupils feel that they have a voice within the school, especially through the various groups and committees they are involved in. They say that their ideas are taken seriously and are often acted upon.

There is a very effective and mutually supportive relationship with the local parish. There are many contacts both formal and informal, enabling pupils to have a clear understanding of the importance of the church in the life of their school. Canon Keith Hale is a familiar figure in school and is an effective spiritual guide to the school. The governing body takes their role as leaders of a Christian community seriously and regularly discuss the foundation of the school. The school feels that it is extremely well supported by the diocese and it takes full advantage of the training provided. This relationship with the local Christian community is having a significant impact on the Christian life of the school and there is a very effective parents association. The school is undertaking significant developments in the use of the Understanding Christianity resource in RE. This has had an impact on pupils and they are enjoying the elements already in use, but as yet this has not been formally monitored. The school has made some progress in addressing the areas for improvement from the previous report. There now exists some monitoring of worship and RE does incorporate an appropriate range of faiths. However, elements of both remain as focus for development. RE and collective worship comply with statutory requirements.

There is continuous cycle of reflective and insightful self-evaluation within the school, incorporating a range of views. Focused and robust monitoring by leaders and governors, underpinned by the school's Christian values, has brought about sustained development and is clearly linked to the school's vision.