

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Lindley Church of England Infant School

East Street Lindley HD3 3NE

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Leeds

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local Authority

Kirklees

Date of inspection

12 October 2017

Date of last inspection

7 December 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Primary Academy 141057

Headteacher

Nicola Beaumont

Inspector's name and number

Antoinette Drinkhill 691

School context

The school is a larger than average Church of England Infant Academy. There are 360 pupils on roll in 12 classes. The age range is 4 to 7. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds around a third. The number of disadvantaged pupils for whom pupil premium grant provides support is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is also below the national average. Pupil attendance levels are above national average. There has been a 50% turnover of teaching staff in the last 5 years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lindley Church of England Infant School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong and distinctive character of the school is based firmly on Christian values which are demonstrated in the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and supported by staff and governors.
- The Christian vision of the school directly impacts wellbeing of the children and creates an environment in which pupils make excellent progress from their starting points and achieve well.
- Collective worship (CW) is seen as a central aspect of school life, cultivating moral and spiritual development inspiring learners to be thoughtful, industrious and to behave in an exemplary manner.
- Pupils demonstrate Christian values in action across the school community and beyond, showing respect and consideration for others, which results in outstanding relationships and an enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral understanding is effectively encouraged in religious education (RE) and demonstrated through their ability to use enquiry and interpretation to answer complex questions of meaning and purpose.
- The governors and leadership team are committed to the further development of the Christian character of the school through strong partnerships with parents, the community, the parish and other local schools.

Areas to improve

- Sustain and refresh the school's core Christian values in order to confirm their explicit Christian nature, to deepen pupil understanding of this and ensure that they continue to securely underpin the life of the school.
- Provide further opportunities for all pupils to plan and lead collective worship at a classroom level, in order to afford a more personal experience linked to prayer and reflection.
- Continue to invest in opportunities for children to learn more about Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith in order to develop pupil's understanding of the global diversity within the Christian tradition.

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

Lindley is a vibrant and caring place where Christian character is given a high profile and underpins all aspects of school life. The school is proud of its Christian foundation which the leadership states is, 'reflected in the high quality of care that we offer'. The school's clearly defined Christian values of respect, friendship and trust are understood by all and used to support outstanding behaviour and relationships. The everyday life of the school and its policies are shaped by these values. Staff and governors model and promote the Christian values, which are firmly embedded and visible throughout school through symbols and displays such as the 'recipe for friendship' and the rainbow of 'who makes the sun shine in your life?'. This is underpinned by a variety of opportunities for parents and families to become actively involved with school through the parent forums, family worship and school events. Pupils and parents can clearly articulate the school's Christian values and describe their impact on school life. Pupils say 'teachers are kind and make learning fun' and 'you are helped to do your best'. Parents refer to a 'caring and happy environment'. They say they feel valued and encouraged to become involved and comment on the 'approachable' staff whose 'caring attitude makes the school a place their children want to attend'. Staff have high expectations of children's learning and behaviour. Children achieve well from their starting points. Prominence is given to the development of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding, through learning experiences which promote emotional and academic growth. An example of this is in the 'Spiritual Journeys' children undertake at key times of the year such as Easter, where children experience opportunities designed to support spiritual growth and development. To this end, the school also supports a number of national charities and community projects as well as encouraging pupils to also take on a range of responsibilities such as daily monitors, playground leaders, lunchtime helpers and special thinkers. Within RE children learn from religion as well as about religion, developing knowledge of Christianity and other world religions, particularly of the main faith groups within school. The school does this well. Children have a highly developed understanding and respect for diversity and difference. The faiths and cultures within school are identified and recognised in display, books, story and celebration and there are opportunities for children to share their faith in class during R.E and before and after festivals such as Eid and Diwali. An example of this was seen when children were discussing features of The Five Pillars of Islam and a Muslim child confidently described to the rest of the class, his experience of a 'half fast'. Links are also made within RE to 'the concerns of Christ's Gospel' and children are facilitated to consider the 'big questions' in life and develop a sense of awe, mystery and wonder. Christian values and principles are respected and explored throughout the curriculum as well as aspects of those within other world faith contexts. The school rightly identifies that the aspect of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is an area for further development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship (CW) is a strength of the school and is given central importance to the school's ethos. It provides time for reflection on the school's Christian values and their links to the wider life of the school. A variety of adults are involved in leading CW, including visitors, church groups and the vicar. There is a three year rolling programme of themes in place and child friendly planning is available on display in all classrooms. Children are involved in the delivery of CW through questioning, audience participation, drama and prayers. The worship observed enabled children to make links between the parable of the sower and the value of thankfulness. A link was also made to Anglican traditions through discussion of the church year and harvest. The worship effectively demonstrated the children's willingness to engage actively, when they acted out scenes from the parable, in their quiet reflection and the enthusiastic singing. Children say that collective worship is something they enjoy and it helps them to learn about stories from the Bible. Pupil involvement is also promoted through 'special thinkers' who lead and deliver worship every half term. Worship is evaluated annually with pupil interviews and weekly with evaluation sheets. Children of all faiths and none participate fully in CW and demonstrate an understanding of the need to treat everyone in school with respect. Anglican symbols and practices are introduced during CW and church visits, such as the cross, the Bible, the use of coloured cloths on the worship table reflecting the liturgical season and use of liturgical greetings such as, 'God is good' with a response of 'all the time', during CW. Themes develop pupils' spirituality through stories, questioning and quiet reflection. Understanding of theological aspects of Christianity such as the Trinity are also promoted by lighting of three candles prior to CW. Prayer is an important aspect of school life with prayers being said collectively three times a day and reflection areas in all classrooms and corridors used to afford moments of reflection and contemplation. The school celebrates and marks key festivals within the Christian calendar and CW takes place in St. Stephen's church, which enables children to view St. Stephen's as an extension of school life. This is well attended by families of all faith backgrounds. Parents who attend say that they feel welcome and included. The 'Open the Book programme' in conjunction with St. Stephen's and Lindley Methodist Church also presents Bible stories linked to Christian Values.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious Education (RE) has a high profile in school and is seen as a core curriculum area. The school achieved the RE Quality Mark Gold in 2014 and was re-accredited in June 2017. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus in conjunction with a range of resources to provide a wide and varied learning experience. The new Diocesan syllabus and Understanding Christianity units are currently being phased into year groups starting with Reception. The newly appointed RE leader has undertaken CPD and is part of a local network of subject leaders. Along with senior leadership and governors, she regularly monitors and evaluates RE through lesson observations and other means to ensure high quality and consistency. The school is clear on the next priorities and steps for improvement, such as further developing teacher feedback to pupils in order to support key skills development in RE. RE is assessed and pupil achievement reported annually to parents. Teachers have good subject knowledge, deliver thoughtful learning opportunities and use key questions to promote deeper thinking within RE. The creative curriculum and spiritual journeys, as well as RE, are used to nurture children's spiritual growth. Meaningful links with worship are made via the Christian values that are considered during CW and followed through in RE and are demonstrated in the day to day life of the school. Children are inspired by RE and make excellent progress against national expectations. RE supports children's understanding that people have religious beliefs that differ to their own and includes a Year 2 visit to a faith centre and visitors of different faiths coming in to school. Pupils from different religious backgrounds understand how faith impacts upon people, as seen when one child Muslim child talked confidently about his Jewish friend's beliefs. Children say that they enjoy RE and learn 'interesting and exciting things' and 'all about God'. They apply skills such as enquiry and interpretation in significant ways which was clearly seen in planning, evidence of learning in books and the RE lesson observed. In Year 2 children were busy investigating the 'big question' of, 'What would it be like if everybody followed God's Commandments?' and in a Godly Play session children explored the parable of the lost sheep. Recorded RE work shows good progress in pupils' understanding of Christianity and of other world faiths. It is presented in a variety of ways, reflecting the broad range of teaching approaches used.

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

The inspirational headteacher, in close partnership with the deputy headteacher and other leaders, confidently and passionately articulates the school's vision and mission. This is very robustly underpinned by the school's Christian values of respect, friendship and trust which are shared by all. The governors work closely with the headteacher and senior leaders to develop the strategic direction of the school. They strongly challenge and effectively support the leadership team in its aspiration of continuous improvement and development of Christian distinctiveness. They understand the school's performance and use effective self-evaluation strategies in order to secure this. Leadership of CW and RE takes a high priority in order to promote the most effective practice across school. This is acknowledged as particularly important in light of the appointment of new and inexperienced staff, to ensure the ongoing understanding of and commitment to the school's distinctive character. Pupils have an evolving understanding of national and global communities. Leaders are approachable and supportive of staff and staff work together well in an atmosphere of mutual support. Children's welfare and development are at the heart of all the school does. The school's Christian values are promoted through all aspects of school life but particularly through worship, RE and the behaviour policy. Through the understanding of these values, parents, staff, governors and the local community have a better appreciation of the distinctive nature of a church school and how this impacts on meeting the needs of all pupils, whatever their background. Pupils enjoy school and respect and value each other. Parents support and appreciate the school, saying that 'this school teaches children to be better people', 'I can approach school about anything', 'teachers are very proactive and know you well' and 'you can be involved as much as you are able to'. Parents recognise the inclusive nature of the school and 'the nurture and care' provided for their children. They see this as a clear expression of the school's ethos and Christian values. They are particularly pleased with the variety of communication and partnership offered through the school's 'dojo system' of rewards and communication which supports involvement in the day to day life of the school. The partnership between school and church is evident. Examples of this include visits from the 'Open the Book' team, the visits to church for services and events as well as the vicar's involvement in pastoral support within the school. Succession planning for leadership in a distinctive setting is considered important and has included the deputy's attendance on the 'Dulos' leadership programme, CPD for other leaders and membership of a Diocesan strategic partnership group and local cluster groups. Governors are well informed and attend school regularly in a variety of ways including as 'friends of classes' and when monitoring aspects of the school's provision. The schools has rightly identified that refreshing its approach to the school's embedded Christian values would further enhance the school's distinctiveness in the future.

The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship