

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Seaton St Paul's Church of England Junior School

Seaton Park, Seaton, Workington, Cumbria. CA14 1HA

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Carlisle

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Cumbria

Date/s of inspection

23 March 2017

Date of last inspection

28 June 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Controlled 112277

Headteacher

Amanda Dickinson

Inspector's name and number

Caronne Field 866

School context

Seaton St Paul's CE Junior School is an average sized school of 232 pupils. It is situated in the large village of Seaton in West Cumbria. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and are drawn from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average (15%) as is the proportion with special educational needs and disabilities (5%). Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to the senior leadership team. The school have created a position of SIAMS leader on the senior leadership team. The headteacher has been in post since January 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Seaton St Paul's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian vision for a dynamic, caring and inclusive school built on Christian values is reflected in exemplary relationships between all members of the school community. It significantly impacts upon the lives and achievements of pupils.
- Strong and compassionate Christian leadership from the headteacher ensures every member of the school community is involved in decision-making and feels valued.
- High quality collective worship and religious education (RE) deepen children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding.
- Strong and mutually enriching links between the school and church community make a significant contribution to the school's Christian character and to children's spiritual growth.

Areas to improve

- Provide an even greater range of worship experiences so that children's spiritual development is enhanced by experiencing reflection and prayer in a range of different settings.
- Develop partnerships in the local and wider community in order to share the school's excellent practice.

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

The Christian character of this vibrant and welcoming school community is expressed in high levels of care, support and aspiration. Children and staff share a strong sense of belonging to a school family. A commitment to explicitly expressed Christian values underpins the school's ambition for every child to 'believe, succeed and achieve'. Christian values are at the heart of everything that the school does and inspire all aspects of school improvement. Six core Christian values rooted in the teachings of Jesus are firmly embedded in the school's daily life. Children readily articulate the importance of understanding values such as forgiveness, perseverance and trust. They gave an example of forgiveness in the parable of The Lost Son explaining that the teachings of Jesus show us the way we need to behave towards others. Parents attribute their exemplary behaviour to the school's significant focus on Christian values. Children quickly become confident learners because they understand the importance of perseverance and apply this to their learning. In this inclusive learning environment children achieve good levels of attainment and say that they enjoy coming to school.

SMSC is seamlessly woven through RE, collective worship and the wider curriculum. It enhances the school's distinctive Christian character. Children experience a wide range of creative experiences. For example, a recent theme on the Christian value of courage gave pupils the opportunity to respond imaginatively through role-play to challenging questions such as, 'How would it feel to be a refugee?' Activities such as this have a profound effect on their thinking and attitudes.

The skilfully designed RE curriculum provides a range of exciting experiences which contribute to the Christian character of the school. Children are aware that Christianity is a worldwide faith. They enjoy taking part in the school's Global Christianity days with themes such as, 'Where in the world do Christians pray?' High quality displays around the school reflect children's good understanding of how Christians celebrate and worship in different ways. Visits to the Manjushri Kadampa Buddhist temple and a link with a kindergarten in Ethiopia have a positive impact on children's attitudes to other faith communities and cultures. They are respectful of difference and diversity. A pupil said, 'We need to treat everybody equally and with respect.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is inspirational, engaging and inclusive. It allows all members of the school community to reflect on their lives and to think deeply about the significance of the school's Christian values. Children enjoy a rich variety of activities during worship time, including prayer, music, role-play and time to be still and reflect. Singing is an exceptionally joyful and uplifting expression of praise.

Leadership of worship is exemplary. It draws on the experience of staff, clergy and other Christian groups with the result that children encounter a wide variety of leadership styles. Pupils frequently lead class, whole school and community worship. They plan together and increasingly take responsibility for decisions about how to make worship better. Planning incorporates themes based on Christian values, the Bible and major Christian festivals. It responds effectively to contemporary issues and world events. This results in worship that is meaningful and an effective expression of children's thoughts and feelings. Excellent systems are in place to monitor and evaluate worship. All stakeholders are involved and this leads to recognisable improvements in worship. For example, in a recent review, children devised a 'recipe for a great worship assembly'. Suggestions included using different settings for worship and prayer spaces, especially the outdoors. This has now been included in school improvement planning.

Children understand the value of prayer because of the different experiences of prayer they encounter in worship and in the wider life of the school. The creative ethos crew, a group of pupils drawn from across the school, take great pride in their responsibility for setting up prayer spaces and care for the outdoor garden of peace. Imaginative resources encourage reflection and provide support for children to write their own prayers. Christian meditation and stillness play an important part in the school's approach to prayer. Children explain that these times bring 'a sense of calm and refresh you'. Reflective learning journals and class collective worship folders support children's spiritual journeys and demonstrate the way in which their thinking has developed.

Links with the church and community are exceptionally strong and play a significant role in the worship life of the school. Children are actively involved in regular church services, such as School Sunday, which are well attended and valued by parents and community alike. This means children develop a good knowledge of many Anglican traditions and prayers. Experiences such as Trinity Celebration Day contribute to children gaining a sound

understanding of Christian beliefs about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A parent commented, 'I don't know how the school and the church could be more closely linked together. It's a really strong partnership.'

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

Strong Christian leadership from the headteacher drives the school vision to be a 'dynamic community of care built on Christian values' where everyone can flourish. It underpins all that the school achieves. All members of the school community experience and live out this vision, with the result that this is an inspiring and inclusive place to work and learn. Parents appreciate the school's Christian ethos and values. They speak very highly of the dedication of all staff and of the warmth of welcome, openness and concern for every child.

Governors and senior leaders are bold in promoting the Christian character of the school. They have a clear understanding of development priorities because they rigorously monitor, evaluate and review the school's work. Church school issues are prioritised within school improvement planning. The areas for development from the previous SIAS inspection have been fully addressed and their impact evaluated. Governors and senior leaders accurately identify that much of the work of the school is outstanding. The highly effective self-evaluation process engages all members of the school family. All work collaboratively towards shared goals.

Leadership of RE and collective worship is exemplary and underpinned by high standards of teaching and learning. Professional development has a high priority and whole school teamwork and collaboration is excellent. Leaders and governors are securing effective succession planning through the development of senior and middle leadership teams. The school is outward facing and involved in a wide range of training and support initiatives within the diocese. Leaders now need to consider further ways to share their exemplary practice with others.

Strong and mutually enriching partnerships between the school, church and community help children form relationships which are respectful and supportive. They enjoy being part of church and community events. For instance, the school choir regularly performs at the local theatre to raise funds for West Cumbria Hospice at Home. They also raise funds through Poverty Swap for a kindergarten in Ethiopia. These activities enhance pupils' understanding of their place in the world and their responsibility to others.

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