



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School

Lightcliffe Road
Brighouse
HD6 2HH

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Diocese of Leeds

Local authority: Calderdale

Dates of inspection: 24 November 2016

Date of last inspection: 24 February 2012

School's unique reference number: 107548

Headteacher: Naomi Wood

Inspector's name and number: Antoinette Drinkhill 691

School context

The school is a larger than average-sized two form entry infant school with 168 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be disadvantaged and eligible for pupil premium is below national average, the proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is broadly in-line and pupil attendance is above national average. The school undertakes school-to-school support including the substantive headteacher currently undertaking a temporary executive headteacher role at another primary school in the Diocese.

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

- The committed and effective leadership of the executive headteacher and head of school drive the school's Christian vision, which directly and very positively impacts on the every-day lives and achievements of the whole school community.
- The stated Christian values of the school contribute deeply to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners particularly in relation to respect and care for others.
- The school has exceptionally strong partnerships with parents and the parish which results in clear benefits for children who make excellent progress and achieve well.
- Religious education (RE), worship and prayer form central aspects of the school life, cultivating spiritual and moral development and inspiring learners to exceed expectations.

Areas to improve

- Refine the current self-evaluation system to become more evaluative in order to ensure continuing development of St Andrew's outstanding distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school.
- Enhance pupils' deeper understanding of the nature of the Trinity through religious education (RE) and collective worship (CW).
- Build on pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity and difference within other faith communities and of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

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

Distinctively core Christian values of 'love, respect, patience, truthfulness and forgiveness' are explicit and deeply embedded in this inclusive school. The executive headteacher and head of school act as drivers in the effective delivery of the school's stated commitment to provide 'an education of the highest quality in

a happy, secure, caring and stimulating environment where the beliefs and practices of the Church of England are fundamental to the life of the school'. This commitment underpins the school's ethos and is lived out in all aspects of school life. This is immediately evident through high quality displays with a spiritual focus, confident, friendly pupils and a welcoming staff team. Christian values are taught through RE and CW and reinforced through the whole curriculum. This has a significant impact upon children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). All pupils, even the youngest, are encouraged to develop a spiritual awareness through opportunities to express their thoughts and views as they reflect on key questions in RE and CW about meaning and purpose. For example, in CW children were asked to reflect upon the deeper meaning of the celebration of Christmas and the Christmas story.

The school works hard to inspire a love of learning and develop children's confidence to achieve well and be motivated as independent, respectful learners who can contribute to the local and wider community. All staff 'go the extra mile' for the pupils and their families evidence this by saying that children feel 'the school is like a family that helps each other'. Pupils are encouraged to develop high expectations in their learning and behaviour, which is supported by the Christian ethos and results in achievement that is higher than national average at the end of Key Stage 1. Prayer is seen as an important part of school life. It includes a school prayer, lunchtime prayer and quiet areas, which are used to promote spirituality and reflection. Children use the school's core Christian values to structure their behaviour and relationships. This is evidenced by the positive attitudes of the pupils, the relationships between all school members and higher than national average pupil attendance. Some children have undertaken a visit to Halifax Minster to explore prayer in Christian and Muslim faiths and a variety of books are used for children to hear and reflect upon stories from other faiths on moral-based tales. Staff have received 'cascaded training' to support subject knowledge in this area.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship (CW) and prayer is of central importance in the life of the school and plays a key role in supporting the school's Christian ethos. It supports children's understanding of the Christian faith, the liturgical calendar and uses stories from the Bible to reinforce understanding of the school's core Christian values. Children say respect is particularly important to them 'because if you respect someone then you are kind to them and love them'. All children are familiar with the Lord's Prayer, which is always said during Monday's CW. The importance accorded to CW is evidenced in pupil feedback and evaluation of CW as well as in displays around school centred on Christian values and Bible stories such as 'Daniel in the lion's den'. Pupils say they enjoy worship and describe the use of a candle in CW to help them to reflect upon 'Jesus as the light of the world'. One pupil related the meaning behind the Bible story of Zacchaeus, which helped them to know that everyone can be forgiven, 'even when things go wrong'. There is an annual worship plan that links to key times in the church year as well as biblical themes, which are often a focus for the week. High priority is given to children leading CW and church services such as Harvest, Easter and the leavers' service. These are well attended and appreciated by parents. A variety of staff and other adults lead CW including the vicar, 'Hand to Mouth Ministries' and a local musician. Children are encouraged to apply the learning from worship to their everyday lives and explore themes further during class worship, sometimes composing their own prayers. An example of this was seen when a reception child led other children in prayer during class worship on the deeper significance of gifts at Christmas. Classrooms have reflection areas that mirror key values, the colours of the liturgical year and the current biblical theme, for example the use of nativity sets to promote thinking about the Christmas story. The use of a special Posada bag that children take home in turns, during Advent, containing items to prompt discussion around the Christian festival also supports home involvement. Displays around school further reinforce messages from CW and RE, for example, displays depicting 'God's wonderful world' and 'How do people pray?'. The school recognises that a focus on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is an area for further development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious Education (RE) is given prominence as a core curriculum area with a shared understanding of its importance to supporting the school's vision and values. The experienced RE co-ordinator is passionate about the subject and together with colleagues has developed a robust system to monitor and track RE in order to inform planning and progress. Teaching is based on the locally agreed syllabus with supplementary units on Christmas, Easter, and talking about God. Teachers use an enquiry based approach and questions are used to deepen children's understanding. This encourages children to be reflective and develop opinions. Pupils develop a 'growth mindset', make excellent progress in RE and by the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 1 the majority achieve above national expectations based on pupil

assessment, tracking and work scrutiny. This is in line with other core subjects. Sustained progress across the school is the result of high quality teaching and learning that adds depth and breadth to the pupils' understanding of what they learn from and about RE. RE impacts positively on pupils' lives in school, reinforcing the school's values and the development of SMSC. It is interwoven into school life and children are encouraged to reflect on learning in RE in relation to their own lives. For example, in an effective Year I lesson, children were asked the question, 'how do we know Jesus was a gift from God?' They were encouraged to explore this through the medium of the Bible story and a brightly wrapped gift box. Challenging questions and a variety of engaging learning activities supported this exploration. RE is used to support children's understanding of the links between Christian beliefs and those of other faiths and the significance of religious beliefs for some people. However this is an area that the school should develop even further to support its outstanding distinctiveness and effectiveness. This process has already begun with the RE coordinator having undertaken training on 'learning and teaching on world faiths' and providing training to other staff in school. Leadership of RE is very effective, which is evidenced by pupil progress, pupil engagement and the work done with other schools in the locality to develop units of work on Christianity.

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

The passion and commitment of the executive headteacher contributes significantly to the success of this inspiring church school. Together with the head of school and supported by the vicar, a clear vision of Christian values is articulated and lived out in the daily life of the school. This results in a secure, structured and happy environment within which all pupils thrive, impacting significantly on pupils' academic progress and their spiritual, moral and social development. Adults in school are excellent role models and ensure that high expectations of behaviour and learning are maintained. Governors have a clear view of the importance of sustaining the distinctive Christian ethos of the school and fully support the executive headteacher and head of school in this mission. Their ongoing commitment and evolving knowledge establishes an increasingly evaluative approach to planning and school improvement, resulting in a school that has developed the capacity to support other schools and engage in effective succession planning.

The school works hard to sustain close and effective relationships with the parish church, other local churches, schools including the feeder junior school and the community. Parents say that 'you couldn't find a more welcoming school'. They describe the 'kind staff' who 'are very approachable and always go the extra mile' and highlight how all pupils are made to 'feel special'. They say they regularly enjoy attending events such as 'family worship', 'Christmas crafts' and a 'Eucharistic Service'. They also talk positively about their children's enjoyment of RE, CW with a number attending 'messy church' sessions after school. This strong partnership between home and school supports pupil achievement and develops self-confidence.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about their 'helpful teachers' and their enjoyment of learning, especially CW, RE and 'Godly Play' sessions, which are led in school by members of the parish. Those that attend, enjoy the after school 'Christian Crackers' club. Their obvious enjoyment of a parent led baking activity making Christmas biscuits linked to Christian values evidences this sentiment. Pupils are also keen to support others less fortunate than themselves and regularly raise money for and support charities, for example 'Children in Need' and the 'shoe box appeal'. As well as the partnership with the Diocese, local churches and schools, there is an extensive range of links with the wider community, including a school in Mara, Tanzania.

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

SIAMS report November 2016 St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School Brighouse HD6 2HH