

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

William Cassidi Church of England Primary School

Morrison Street, Stillington, TS21 1JD

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Durham

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Stockton on Tees

Date of inspection

14 June 2018

Date of last inspection

February 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Aided 111720

Headteacher

Julie Cornelius

Inspector's name and number

Valerie Hall 859

School context

William Cassidi Church of England primary school is medium sized rural school on the outskirts of town. It has a wide catchment area, including many farms. There are 164 pupils on roll with an additional 22 nursery children. Pupil numbers have fallen since the last inspection. There are fewer than average numbers of pupils eligible for pupil premium grant and fewer than average pupils with additional needs. The headteacher has been in post for 12 years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of William Cassidi Church of England Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian values and vision are promoted daily and lived out by all members of the school's community, so that they continually have outstanding impact on the life of learners.
- The school's motto 'Go the second mile' underpins and fully influences the work of the school and its work with families, so that relationships are outstanding.
- There is a respect for diversity in many forms which is highly evident in children responses to one another.
- Governors have ensured that parish links remain strong between school and the local church, St John the Divine, to great mutual benefit.

Areas to improve

- To offer staff worship opportunities so that they can strengthen relationships with pupils and each other and have time to reflect on the work and life of school
- Governors to develop and maintain direct supportive links with the RE lead to ensure that she is able to continue to lead the subject with confidence
- Governors to consider new guidance on the teaching of relationships and sex education (RSE) and to develop plans to introduce a new RSE curriculum.

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

Since the last inspection, the leaders of this school have made improvements in ensuring values underpin the outstanding work of the school. The stated values are: love, care, compassion, friendship, respect, perseverance, forgiveness, thankfulness, generosity, courage, trust, service and respect. The school selects a values every half term and uses it as basis for religious education (RE) and worship. This ensures values are thoroughly taught and result in a comprehensive understanding of the Christian ethos of the school by all stakeholders. High quality work is

available on the school's website to help families reinforce Christian values teaching. This again supports parents and helps them to appreciate the Christian mission of the school. Attainment and progress were above average at all key stages and in all subjects in 2017. There have been no exclusions and attendance has risen after dropping below national average in the previous year. Leaders attribute these high standards, achieved in all subjects at all key stages to the values and teachers speak about how pupils apply values to their everyday lives. As a result, behaviour is exemplary and bullying is rare. Where it does occur, pupils are happy that teachers deal with it promptly and highly effectively. Attendance has significantly improved due to the high quality support families are offered when they encounter difficulties. The rural nature of the school often means that transport and weather pose problems for attendance and school follows its motto of 'Going the Second Mile' to ensure pupils have the opportunity to improve attendance. The wellbeing of all pupils is of paramount importance. The school has established a garden which has won accolades from Britain in Bloom and uses this as a reflection area and place of quiet and wellbeing for all pupils. There is a thriving gardening club which also contributes to the school's charitable work as it provides products for charity boxes which pupils deliver. Phonics results in Year 1 are well above national standard as a result of this early intervention. Relationships are very strong in this deeply loving school. Staff talk about how strong relationships help them to support each other in the school. Parents and carers talk with very deep love and respect about how they feel staff support them in times of trouble. This helps parents manage challenging situations and conversations, so their children are settled in school. One parent talked movingly about how she had been helped back into employability by volunteering at school. This care is underpinned by clearly stated Christian values, which are displayed in school, taught in the worship planning and through highly effective RE links. Diversity in all its forms is very well understood in this school. The personal social and health curriculum address issues surrounding diversity in family life and the Global Learning project helps pupils pose big questions about global issues such 'Does poverty affect British families?' Children understand the wider community of their town as school has an outstanding appreciation of the risks of extremism in rural communities and the need for its pupils to understand all aspects of the wider world before they encounter it at secondary school. Religious education pays a very strong part in enabling pupils and their families to think about Christian lives across Britain and the world. Pupils talk with deep understanding about other faiths and they have impressive respect for those whose ideas and opinions are different to their own.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Since 2013, work on class worship and reflection areas has led to substantial and highly effective improvement. Every class has a reflection area and an RE area, sometimes linked, depending on the topic. Pupils use them as a focus to write prayers and reflections and also makes others aware of their worries and concerns. Pupils are allowed to say if their prayers are private or can be read by others, emphasising that prayer can be public or personal and can be used for many purposes. Links to RE areas demonstrate to pupils that RE and worship have clear and highly effective links to each other. As such, pupils have a very clear view of the links between elements of the bible, such as the life of Jesus and the Trinity narrative, which they are able to interpret in terms of their own lives. One child described the Trinity as 'love in 3 persons'. Adults enjoy taking part in termly Eucharist, and speak of how moving the experience is when all the school family comes together to worship. Staff also enjoy worshipping with the community at key points in the Anglican calendar, such as Easter and Christmas. These services are highly valued and well respected by the whole community. All adults speak of the impact prayer and worship has on them. One parent described the way her child speaks of prayer and how it has helped the family overcome a period of challenge. As a result, they use prayers her child writes to great benefit to them both. There is a well-planned collective worship cycle which reflects Anglican tradition and practice and school has a termly Eucharist, held in school, to which clergy and staff are welcomed. At this time, there are no clergy available to school and governors have worked hard to ensure there is a period of stability by co-opting a parochial church council member to the governing body to maintain strong and effective links to the church. This has ensured that pupils still feel actively involved in the life of the local church and the church benefits by school providing services at prominent festivals such as Harvest and Advent. Children are actively involved in planning, leading and delivering worship which they do to great effect and thoroughly enjoy. On the day of inspection there was highly enjoyable worship incorporating Global Learning work about other communities and it included high quality singing, dancing and child-led prayer. Children and families said afterwards that they appreciated the lengths the school went to, in order to ensure their children understood Christianity as a Global religion. Worship and reflection are woven seamlessly into the fabric of the curriculum so that pupils make clear and obvious links. Teachers, leaders and governors all evaluate worship and this has led to strong improvements over time. Families and pupils also have the opportunity to express their views through well planned questionnaires. This has led to changes in worship styles and times, which have been very well received by families. School encourages a variety of responses to prayer. Quiet reflection is available as well as enthusiastic collective worship. Pupils are also encouraged to take part in 'Cross Factor', a Christian club, at St John's Church and are prepared for access to communion before confirmation in line with parish policy. Governors have worked very hard to ensure this is available to all pupils. They work with a number of parochial church

councils to ensure that they reflect policies from all parishes within the school's very wide catchment area. This underlines the commitment leaders and governors have to highly inclusive worship, and that opportunities to take part in the Eucharist are available to all pupils who want it.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Since the last inspection a new leader has been appointed. She has made a very good start in establishing 'Understanding Christianity' as the part of the RE syllabus. This has been highly effective work and she has thoroughly evaluated her work and teachers' feedback. She is working on responses to evaluations and thus improving standards rapidly. Standards in RE are comparable to those of English across the school which is higher than national averages. Work in books and scrap books is of high quality, with the schools marking policy being applied to the same standard as in other subjects. This emphasises the high status the subject enjoys across the school. Work in scrap books is of equally high standard to work in RE books. It exemplifies how pupils apply their knowledge and learning and how they make links to other curriculum areas and to worship teaching. The assessment system is new, and as such it is not yet possible to judge progress over time. Rigorous observations of teaching and learning show that teaching is good and feedback to teachers is acted upon. This is improving standards further. There are a range of activities provided, including model making, art and in depth discussion, which all contribute to a rich and varied curriculum. It is clear in scrap books that Christian values play a prominent part in RE teaching. One scrap book had detailed work on the meaning of respect for others, which is a key value of the school and underpins much of its life and work. Pupils are expected to show respect to one another and Christian concepts and the bible narrative, which are taught very well and with great empathy. Children stated clearly that they know that respect for one another is key, and that everyone should have an opinion and that it should be respected. The subject leader has in-depth subject knowledge and is working hard to support teachers in their implementation of 'Understanding Christianity' and assessment. She is well supported by senior leaders and has time at staff meetings to lead others and thus secure high standards. The RE lead currently feeds back her monitoring outcomes to the headteacher but does not yet have direct links to governors so that they do not yet support and challenge her directly.

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

Standards and achievement in this school are above national and local levels. Few pupils are eligible for additional funding. There have been no exclusions in recent years and behaviour is exemplary. It is clear that a very well-articulated Christian vision underpins excellent standards and contributes well to the high achievement of the school. It is lived out by the wide respect shown by all teachers and leaders to families and pupils. This is one of the school's core Christian values. The motto 'Go the Second Mile' which is lived by every member of the school community and well exemplified by staff, families and pupils who go to great lengths to support one another. Staff communicate regularly on matters of mutual support and ensure they all feel loved and respected. Leaders understand the school very well and work extremely hard to mitigate the effects of rural isolation and the need for social contact for affected families. The leaders of the school, including governors, are all very keen to prioritise the needs of pupils. As a result, relationships are strong with community members as they have a deep appreciation of all the school does for their children. Leaders ensure they have a very wide and varied curriculum and lots of opportunities to socialise and have fun together. Leaders have provided an outstanding curriculum to meet the needs of pupils and the Global Learning project plays a big part in this. Due to falling rolls, the school faces some budgetary challenges but leaders have taken advantage of this situation to ensure the youngest pupils get the best start in life by being part of small classes. Leaders have rightly prioritised pupils' educational needs and as a result standards are high at the end of reception year. Pupils are also continuously reminded about the needs of others. This results in a highly effective programme of charitable action, where children reach out to their community. Succession planning is a strength of this highly successful school. Two assistant headteachers began their careers at William Cassidi as newly qualified teachers, and one has recently been appointed as head teacher of another small local church of England school. Parents are overwhelming positive about this school and its work, which goes above and beyond what might be expected of a small primary school. One parent spoke of the love she had received for her family and how it had helped them and continues to do so. She said movingly: 'This school is a little seed that grows inside you. That seed becomes a flower and the flower is love'

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