

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ainderby Steeple Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Station Lane, Morton on Swale, Northallerton. DL7 9QR

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	The Diocese of Leeds
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Date of inspection	16 th November 2016
Date of last inspection	26 th June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 121471
Headteacher	Fiona Sharp
Inspector's name and number	Linda Dixon 861

School context

Ainderby Steeple is smaller than average school with 87 pupils who are taught in four mixed age classes. Pupils come to the school from a wide catchment area. The school has a lower proportion of free school meals but a larger than national percentage of vulnerable pupils (13.8%). This has an impact on the school budget and data. On entry to school pupils' starting points and cohort numbers vary from year to year. The majority of pupils are of white British background however a small percentage 2.3% have English as a second language. A new classroom was added to the school in the summer of 2016 and has improved facilities for the early years. The school is a member of the Swaledale Teaching School Alliance. The parish church is a 20 minutes' walk from the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ainderby Steeple as a Church of England school are good

- The committed leadership of the headteacher who with governors and staff promotes a vision for the school based on distinctively Christian values which support the wellbeing of all its pupils.
- The Christian character and values of the school contribute well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners, especially in relationship to service, friendship and responsibility.
- The strong relationships which exist in the school which have a clear impact on behaviour, attitudes to learning and pupils' enjoyment of school.

Areas to improve

- Strengthen the school's Christian values to be more explicit, so that their Biblical roots can be clearly understood and articulated by everyone.
- Develop pupils' understanding of the Trinity and its significance in Christian worship.
- Ensure that a more systematic method of monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and Religious Education takes place in the school which involves all stakeholders.

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

The Christian values of care, love and friendship are at the heart of this school and make a significant contribution to children's spiritual development, attitudes and their learning. However, the school's articulation of the values rooted in Christian theology needs to be developed to deepen pupils understanding. Pupils can talk about the values and know when they have used them, but do not fully comprehend the links with the teachings of Jesus. The Christian requirement to love one another is demonstrated through the school's buddy system and their actions towards one another. As one pupil said, 'helping others makes you feel good inside'. Pupils value the way trust is demonstrated through the many opportunities there are for them to take responsibility. This means everyone gets a chance and pupils recognise that they 'grow in confidence' and self-esteem. Courtesy and cooperation are exemplary as seen in worship where older pupils bring younger ones into the hall and also ensure that they are well cared for at lunchtimes. Excellent behaviour and good attendance stems directly from the school's caring Christian ethos. A rich and diverse curriculum throughout the school supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and enhances the school's distinctive character. As a result of regular involvement with pupils from the nearby Dales School pupils learn directly about equality and inclusion. The school has a record of good and outstanding standards and achievement in recent years, but data reveals a dip in performance in 2016. There is a practice in this inclusive school of supporting and nurturing pupils who have learning, behaviour and emotional difficulties. This is determined by a Christian belief in the value of each child and its aim to help them achieve their full potential. Parents report that individual achievements are recognised by the school particularly in collective worship. They also appreciate the family feel of the school and the excellent relationships between all adults and pupils. Pupils demonstrate service to others in the community through the work they do raising money for different charities chosen by them annually, such as 'Globals make noise', Thirsk Wildlife Haven and Candlelighters. Great efforts are made to promote pupils' understanding of diverse communities. A link with a school in Ghana is used to develop pupils understanding, compassion and empathy with their peers in different circumstances. A member of staff has been to Ghana in order to share his first-hand experience with the pupils in school. Further opportunities for understanding diversity were provided by a whole school celebration day on Islam when pupils experienced a range of creative activities organised by visitors. This is in addition, to the planned Religious Education (RE) provision of the school. In the curriculum RE has as an important place and forms a channel for the school applying an enquiry based approach to learning across the curriculum. This involves many active and collaborative activities for the pupils to undertake. It allows them to ask big questions that challenge faith and belief. This is particularly the case for the older pupils who experience input from a member of the Bible Explorer Group and this has increased their understanding of how Christians deal with for example loss. The need for more systematic monitoring and evaluation of RE is recognised by the school as an area for development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils and staff speak of the importance of daily collective worship. Pupils recognise the significance of the lighting of the candle, relating it to the presence of Jesus. This develops a strong sense of the school as a family and a worshipping community. A focus on Christian values during this time enriches this sense of common purpose. Everyone is involved in and values acts of worship which focus on the celebration of achievements. The school's commitment to helping everyone succeed is demonstrated vividly at these times. A wide range of achievement is recognised and adults as well as pupils genuinely celebrate one another's successes. Parents regularly attend worship which is organised by individual classes. Prayer, Bible stories and the cycle of the church year are regularly planned into individual acts of worship and involve all stakeholders. They develop in pupils an understanding of the Anglican faith and practice. As a result, pupils are improving their understanding of the Bible and the life of Jesus. However, further embedding is required for the pupils to fully appreciate and articulate the relevance of the messages in their daily life and the link to the school's Christian values. Foundation governors attend worship and their feedback shows that it is a positive experience for the pupils who respond with enjoyment and respect. Pupils say that quiet music at the beginning of worship prepares them for reflection. In this way it supports their spiritual development. Through worship pupils understand the importance of prayer and readily engage in opportunities to do so. They have written their own prayers which are included in worship and these are seen as part of their own spiritual journey. However, prayer extends beyond daily worship to the sharing of prayers at the end of the day and an Irish blessing at the end of the week for everyone's safe return the following week. Church festivals such as Harvest and Easter are held in St Helen's Church. They are well attended and valued by pupils, staff, parents and the community. Similarly, Christmas carols are well supported in the school. Through these events children have a good understanding of the cycle of the church year and the meaning behind Christian festivals is being developed. However, the concept of the Trinity has not been explored in any depth resulting in the pupils' knowledge and

understanding of this being weak.

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

The personal Christian faith of the head, staff and governors ensures and sustains the school's distinctive Christian character, but this is not yet fully articulated from a Biblical perspective by all members of the school community. Detailed self- evaluation arises out of leaders` commitment to the value of each child as a child of God. This means they have a good understanding of standards pupils attain and the progress they make. Using this information strategies have been developed to address areas in which improvement is needed. For example, there is a current drive on improving writing throughout the school and across all curriculum areas. The impact of this is seen in pupil outcomes and higher standards in writing this term. Therefore governors actively support and challenge the school and bring valuable skills to their work promoting its ethos and effectiveness. Parents speak enthusiastically about the strong community spirit of the school and how it develops the whole child. Leaders invest trust in pupils and they in turn willingly accept responsibility. Friendship and love underpins the school's Christian approach to all aspects of school life and impacts on outstanding behaviour and relationships. The school has identified that regular monitoring and evaluation by leaders of the school's Christian values is an area for development, in order to continue to improve its Christian distinctiveness. This is as a result of self- evaluation by all stakeholders together with the monitoring of RE and collective worship. Christian leadership is enriched by excellent relationships with a number of local churches from a range of Christian denominations. Activities organised by the church for example, Little Acorns and Busy Bees are well attended by pupils from the school. The vicar is an active governor and his church is well used for the support of RE lessons for example during a topic on baptism he led a model service with pupils. This led to the pupils gaining greater understanding of the place of baptism in the Christian faith. Members of the local community enjoy attending school services when held in the church. Partnerships with the diocese are used by the school to secure the professional development of staff and governors. Recently, the RE leader undertook training led by the diocese. As a result, further staff training has been undertaken in school. Leaders ensure there is good provision for pupils` SMSC development; this is achieved through the wider curriculum, themed enrichment days and extra- curricular activities. These experiences provide a secure foundation stone on which pupils can build their own lives and make decisions. The impact for pupils is also greater appreciation of diversity and the richness of their own and other cultures. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report November 2016 Ainderby Steeple Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School DL7 9QR