

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Easington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Easington Village, Peterlee, SR8 3BP

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese**

**Durham**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Durham

Date/s of inspection

5 May 2017

Date of last inspection

25 April 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

114231

Headteacher

Andrea Swift

Inspector's name and number

David Tait 887

#### School context

Easington is a smaller than average voluntary controlled primary school situated on the east Durham coast with 111 pupils on roll. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is below average. The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British background. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed and the school has undergone extension work with the provision of a new classroom. At the most recent Ofsted inspection in July 2015, the school was graded 'good.'

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Easington as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Distinctive Christian values are at the very heart of the school community and impact significantly on every aspect of learners' lives. This enables all members of the community to flourish and experience life in all its fullness.
- Relationships at every level are of the highest standard and embody respect, affirmation and love. This is a direct result of the outworking of the school's Christian values and the school's awareness of its role at the heart of the parish and community.
- Thought provoking, varied and meaningful acts of worship are valued by the whole community and lead to impressive understanding of the Holy Trinity and the person of Jesus Christ.
- Insightful and thoughtful self-evaluation enables strategies for improvement to be implemented and leads to sustained improvements over time.

#### Areas to improve

- Review the school's ethos statement, ensuring that it is both child friendly and states clearly the Christian vision that is at the very heart of the school.
- Consider ways to plan for the development of all leaders as leaders in church schools.

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

Easington lives out its vision to ensure that each member of the school community can experience life in all its fullness within a welcoming and nurturing Christian family. The school's distinctive Christian values of trust, thankfulness, hope, friendship and forgiveness are the very heartbeat of this vibrant and inclusive community. They are attributed by its members to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The dedication and commitment of the headteacher and all her staff in serving each individual child and their families supports the academic and spiritual development of all learners, irrespective of their background. As a result, the school's strong Christian character makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Behaviour is excellent and the school rightly attributes this to its Christian ethos and approach to relationships whereby children learn from their mistakes within a well-developed understanding of Christian forgiveness. Attendance is good because of the Christian ethos of the school, which makes it a nurturing place to be. Staff are attentive to the needs of all. Outcomes for children are good and improving. Progress and attainment data for children currently in school demonstrates that standards are high and that progress is good throughout the school. This is readily attributed to the school's Christian ethos. Planned interventions support any disadvantaged children, with children encouraged to reach their full potential. Every opportunity is taken to acknowledge and celebrate success. Pupils learn about diverse cultures and communities through both RE and the variety of cultural experiences that are provided across the curriculum. Their global awareness is enriched through charity fundraising, the motivation for which pupils attribute to the school's Christian values. Pupils learn about world faiths other than Christianity and their experiences are enhanced by welcoming visitors from a number of faith traditions. Pupils understand that Christianity is a multi-cultural, world faith and are eager to extend their knowledge through questioning and exploration. Pupils are respectful of difference and excited by diversity. Pupils are enthused and challenged by RE. They find inspiration in Bible stories from both the Old and New Testaments. They can articulate the narrative of the Christian year well and demonstrate a very good level of religious literacy. As one parent noted, 'Children ask big questions, the school develops them from the inside out.' As a result, RE makes a very good contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' personal and spiritual development.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Worship at Easington is a time of purposeful fellowship and reflection. It is a joyful and inclusive occasion that is greatly valued by members of both the school and wider community. One child perceptively commented, 'It's a time to reflect, get closer to God, receive forgiveness and think about making changes.' Daily worship benefits from a wide variety of leadership. It has a strong focus on enabling participants to develop a very firm understanding of Jesus Christ and of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils reflect, pray and experience the awe and wonder of the world around them during the worship time and this has a great spiritual impact upon them. Worship is structured around the school's Christian values and the seasons of the Church's year. As a result, pupils exhibit an impressive degree of understanding of the Anglican tradition and patterns for worship. Older pupils speak knowledgeably about the use of symbolism such as the cross, candle, liturgical colours, bread and wine. A rich variety of themes delivered in a way that is responsive to the needs of the pupils challenges them to see what the Christian faith looks like when lived out in their lives. Acts of worship are imaginative and thoughtfully prepared. They involve good levels of participation by all who attend. Pupils have extensive experience in its planning and leadership. The Fully Rely On God (FROG) group are instrumental in leading worship and their contribution is greatly valued by their fellow pupils and adults alike. Singing is exuberant and joyful thus providing an uplifting beginning and end to worship. Pupils see prayer as an important part of school life and enjoy writing their own prayers and sharing these by leading others in prayer. Classroom reflection areas are valued and used constantly. As one child said, 'I can pray anywhere.' Effective support from the local clergy for the leadership of worship has led to sustained improvements over time. Monitoring and evaluation of worship involves all members of the school community and has led to significant improvements in provision, most notably the increased use of pupil worship leaders. Relationships with the local community are strong and enable the school to draw on a wide variety of leaders of worship, such as the incumbent, curate and foundation governors, to enhance provision. Parents and carers join with the school and the church community at key points in the church calendar to worship in church together. The children play important roles in leading such services at Harvest, Christmas and Easter and the monthly Wednesday Communion service at church. These occasions undoubtedly play their part in maintaining and strengthening the bond between the communities; indeed the shared vision unites school and parish.

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

The headteacher, unstintingly supported by the deputy headteacher, leads the school with a clear and determined Christian vision. Her personal faith shines through all her work and relationships in school, with the focus always on the unique value of each individual. The staff and governors follow and support this lead with consistent commitment. The Christian care and support given to every child and family enables them to reach their full potential within a supportive Christian environment. As one parent commented, 'the school values everyone and Christian values are consistently put into practice.' The Christian vision is clear to all members of the school community. The school unstintingly promotes its values through its communications and the full breadth of its work. However, the ethos statement does not do justice to the school's Christ-centred approach as it does not fully encapsulate the Christian values at the heart of the school's work. The whole community benefits from the fact that the Christian values are lived out by staff and children day by day. The local clergy and foundation governors are closely involved in school and this reinforces the strong links between the church and the school. The impact made by the school's Christian vision is secured by detailed, efficient and strategic planning, based closely on the SIAMS evaluation schedule. This is open and candid. Governors are effective in their role because they keen to challenge when appropriate as well as offering support and encouragement to the staff team. Issues raised by the previous report have been tackled thoroughly and successfully. As a result, the capacity for sustained future improvement is excellent. Future leadership in schools is promoted through excellent teamwork, effective partnership and cluster group working and high quality in-service training. The development of leaders as distinctive leaders of church schools is less secure. The partnerships and relationships with other local schools, the parish church, the diocese and the community at large are strong and mutually beneficial. Examples include the pupils singing in a local care home, toilet twinning projects and a partnership with the Diocese of Lesotho. The pupils' understanding of Christian compassion prompts them towards charitable endeavour. They offer their gifts willingly, in imitation of Jesus, in the service of others. Parents and carers are immensely, and rightly, proud of their school, as one parent commented, 'every aspect of the school is fantastic'. The headteacher and governors give the leadership of RE and collective worship a high priority. The RE leader has a clear vision and plan for the development of RE and is tenacious in sourcing support and developing partnerships to enhance teaching and learning. Collective worship is well led by the headteacher, who actively seeks opportunities to sustain and improve worship provision. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met.

SIAMS report May 2017 Easington CE (VC) Primary School, Peterlee SR8 3BP