

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Lanchester Endowed Parochial Church of England Primary School

Front Street Lanchester Durham DH7 0HU	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Durham
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Durham
Date of inspection	6 December 2017
Date of last inspection	4/5 December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled - 131168
Headteacher	Jane Davis
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Canon Steven Harvey - 891

School context

The school is a larger than average primary school. In recent years the school roll has been increasing, and there are currently 331 pupils in the main school. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs has grown significantly over the last two years, and the number with a statement of special educational needs is double the national average. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to staffing and senior leadership. A major building extension has recently been completed.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lanchester Endowed Parochial Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The school's distinctive Christian character makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, well-being and academic achievement. Pupils recognise and value the impact which their school as a church school has on their lives.
- Collective worship has a central place in the life of the school and powerfully expresses its Christian character. Its impact is articulated with clarity and conviction by the whole community.
- The school is led by a senior leadership team and governing body whose members are committed to the school as a church school and who promote a vision which is rooted in Christian values.
- A range of local, national and international partnerships contribute very significantly to pupils' knowledge and understanding of local, national and global communities.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, in order to enrich their knowledge of the diverse cultural expressions of Christianity as a global faith.
- Monitor more fully how the school's distinctive Christian character is expressed in teaching and learning across the curriculum, in order to evaluate more clearly, for strategic planning purposes, the impact of the school's Christian character.

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

The school's distinctive Christian character is rooted in its core values of love, compassion, trust, hope and justice. These values are clearly displayed in the school and are supported by biblical texts, other Christian teachings, and paintings of biblical scenes, which are attractively presented on walls throughout the buildings. This helps to ensure that the school's Christian distinctiveness is well understood by the school community. Every pupil is regarded as a child of God, to be respected and loved. This is reflected in the school's being a caring and nurturing community, with a strong family feel, in which every pupil is helped to be the best they can be and to know that fullness of life of which Christ spoke. Governors speak of this in terms of the 'warm wash of Christianity flowing over the children'.

Pupils speak of the importance of their school being a church school, and they recognise and value the impact this has on their lives. They readily acknowledge how the school's Christian character makes a very positive contribution to their behaviour, their relationships, and their attitudes. The pupils regard this character as leading to their good relationships with each other, to the absence of bullying, and to their concern for those less fortunate than themselves. The school has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The school's Christian character evokes from pupils a genuine care for those who are disadvantaged. Parents articulate their appreciation of how well pupils empathise with those with special needs, and of the school as a community which welcomes and integrates those who need particular help.

The school's Christian character, with its emphasis on pastoral care, and on nurturing pupils' emotional well-being, resilience and self-confidence, has the effect of raising pupils' aspirations. This contributes significantly to their academic achievement. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the progress they make from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, and in their attainment at Key Stage 2, pupils achieve standards which are above the national average. Disadvantaged pupils make progress which is equal to that achieved by other pupils.

Pupils are encouraged and enabled to explore their spirituality, not only through collective worship, but also through opportunities to experience awe and wonder in the extensive and attractive outside area. Pupils respond well to these opportunities. The recent creation of a well-used outside reflection area, which has the school's values carved on wooden steps and benches, was the result of a request from pupils for an outside area for rest and reflection.

The school's Christian character makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, which is well addressed throughout the curriculum. Secure foundations are laid in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where social skills and moral reflection feature prominently in play and in each pupil having, in turn, the 'special helper' responsibility. Pupils' SMSC development is also supported by the wide range of leadership opportunities available to them, and through the school's being a Fair Trade School and a Rights Respecting School. The latter, linked to the United Nations Charter of Children's Rights, makes a powerful contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of global communities. It also extends their knowledge and understanding of how the school's values, particularly justice, can be pursued in the world beyond the school.

Religious education (RE) makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian character. The amount of time given to Christianity ensures that pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and teachings. The subject also promotes their appreciation of difference and diversity within Christianity, particularly in this country. Their knowledge of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is less well developed. RE also makes a positive contribution to pupils' SMSC development. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths contributes to their respect for religious and cultural diversity locally, nationally and globally.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship has a central place in the life of the school and powerfully expresses its Christian character. The value of collective worship is widely appreciated and its impact is articulated with clarity and conviction. A calm, reflective and spiritual atmosphere pervades collective worship. It engages all pupils, and their engagement is evident in their attention and enjoyment, and in the eagerness with which they join in singing and respond to questions.

Collective worship is distinctively Christian by being rooted in Christian beliefs and teachings. Biblical material features prominently and pupils articulate clearly their knowledge of a range of biblical stories and how they relate them to their daily lives. For example, pupils spoke of the parable of the good Samaritan as encouraging their love and compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. Collective worship has a strong focus on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and pupils articulate the central position he occupies in the Christian faith. They are also able to express, in an age-appropriate way, an understanding of Christian teaching about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The invitation to pupils to join in the saying or singing of a prayer, and to respond by saying 'Amen' at the end, only if they feel able to make the prayer their own, ensures that worship is also inclusive.

Collective worship inspires a high level of spiritual reflection, not least through the central place given to prayer. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of prayer, and speak with openness and confidence of the use they make of prayer in their daily lives. Reflection areas are attractively and engagingly resourced, and are well used by pupils. When

they place prayers which they have written into their classroom's prayer jar, they regard this as placing the prayer 'into the hands of Jesus'. Pupils contribute confidently and sensitively to collective worship, and not least through the pupil worship leaders' choosing and reading prayers which pupils have written.

Collective worship is closely linked to the school's core Christian values and encourages a high degree of moral reflection. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the contribution which collective worship makes to their learning about Christian values and how they are challenged to relate these values to their daily lives. For example, one of the school's core values is compassion. Pupils respond to this by contributing gifts of food to the school's 'reverse Advent calendar' and gifts to its shoebox appeal. These gifts support a local food bank and children in need in Eastern Europe.

Collective worship reflects the Anglican tradition. It follows the seasons of the church's year, and on major occasions, such as Christmas and Easter, worship is held in the parish church. Parents value the opportunities to share in school services in the parish church, and speak of these as 'spiritual experiences for extended families'. A range of visitors, including local Anglican clergy and ministers from other denominations, lead worship regularly, and contribute significantly to pupils' knowledge and understanding of difference and diversity within the Christian faith.

Pupils have regular opportunities to contribute to the planning and leading of worship, particularly with the services held in the parish church. A focus for improvement at the last inspection was to reintroduce the celebration of the Eucharist. This has been done very successfully and contributes significantly to pupils' rich experience of worship. Year 5 pupils have a major role in planning and leading the half-termly Eucharists. Pupils also have regular opportunities to evaluate collective worship. Their observations and suggestions are taken to senior leaders by their worship leaders, and pupils speak of being listened to and their suggestions acted upon – for example, worship leaders' reading prayers. Other stakeholders, particularly staff and local clergy, also contribute to the monitoring and evaluating of collective worship, and this leads directly to change and improvement.

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

The school is led by a senior leadership team, some of whose members have only recently been appointed, and a governing body who are committed to the school as a church school. They promote a vision which is rooted in Christian values, especially love and compassion. They describe with conviction the impact of their vision on the whole life of the school community, and particularly on pupils' personal development, behaviour, relationships, aspirations and achievements. Leaders say that 'we work hard to ensure that the children are happy; and happy children learn well'.

Effective monitoring and evaluation procedures give leaders a good understanding of the school's performance, and lead directly to strategic planning for improvement. The monitoring of how the school's Christian character is reflected in teaching and learning, however, is less well developed. This restricts leaders' ability to evaluate fully the impact of the school's Christian character. Governors share in monitoring and evaluation, through regular learning walks, links with subject leaders, and close attention to performance data. The governing body's wellbeing committee, whose responsibilities include pastoral care and inclusion, is particularly effective in its concern for the impact of the school's Christian character in these areas. For example, the financial support given to families in need, for such things as school trips, is expressed in terms of responding to Christ's teaching about the poor.

Leaders are committed to the professional development of staff, and recognise the benefits this brings to the school's current leadership. For example, a national qualification being taken by the school's special educational needs coordinator is impacting positively on the school's practice. Governors respond well to training opportunities provided by the diocese and the local authority, and recognise their responsibility for succession planning.

Partnerships are a particular strength of the school. Relations with the local churches, and particularly with the Anglican parish church, enable the school to benefit from the contributions of clergy and lay people and to contribute to the life of the local church and community. Parishioners speak of the rich mutual benefit of these relationship, and say that pupils' contribution to the life of the church 'boosts our confidence in the future of Christianity'. The partnership with parents and carers is also strong. Parents speak of an 'open-door policy'. Comments such as 'my son comes home talking about the school's Christian values', and 'the school ensures that pupils' moral compass points to good', are met with widespread agreement. The school has a link with a school in Tamworth, in a different social context, and a very considerable involvement in the European Erasmus Project. These bring very positive benefits to the pupils, and particularly to their understanding of national and global communities.

Leaders have ensured that the areas for development identified in the last inspection, in 2012, have been, or are being, addressed. The celebration of the Eucharist has been re-introduced, new methods of evaluating collective worship have been adopted, and the school's core values have been incorporated in policy documents. Work is continuing in evaluating the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Leaders also ensure that arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.