

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Kirkby-la-Thorpe Church of England Primary Academy

Church Lane
Kirkby-la-Thorpe
Sleaford
Lincs
NG34 9NU

Current SIAMS inspection grade Good	Good
Diocese	Lincoln
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 December 2013
Date of inspection	7 March 2017
Date of last inspection	27 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 140445
Headteacher	Katie Gravil
Inspector's name and number	Anne Platt 807

School context

Kirkby-la-Thorpe is a smaller than average primary school with 144 pupils arranged into six class groups. Most pupils are of a White British background and live in the village or surrounding area. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is much lower than the national average. Attendance is above the national average. The school was inspected by OFSTED in September 2016 and judged good overall. The school converted to an academy in December 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirkby-la-Thorpe as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values are established throughout the school community and make an important contribution to the quality of relationships and are helping to improve pupil achievement.
- The church and the wider community contribute to the life of the school in a way that benefits pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Acts of worship make a valuable contribution to the development of pupils' well-being and appreciation of faith and belief.

Areas to improve

- Strategically plan the development of all staff and governors so that they more effectively contribute as leaders of a church school.
- Ensure all pupils have an understanding of Christianity as a global faith so that they better understand diversity beyond their own community.
- Increase pupil's experiences in planning and leading worship to enable them to have a greater sense of ownership in this key area of church school life.

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

The Christian character is good because Kirkby-la-Thorpe is a caring, nurturing and welcoming school where all pupils feel valued and special. Pupils enjoy coming to this happy Christian school where attendance is good and there have been no exclusions.

The Christian values of, 'kindness, learning and tolerance,' reflect the initials of the village and are promoted through RE and worship. These core values are embedded in daily practice through biblical and faith sources and make a good contribution to the spiritual, social and moral development of learners. Members of the school community talk confidently about how values inform decisions from the 'playground to the governors meeting' ensuring a culture of mutual respect. The distinctively Christian values are made explicit through displays and have a positive impact on the behaviour of pupils. The school aspires for pupils to be, 'independent thinkers with a life-long love of learning and a strong sense of Christian values.' Current school data shows this is beginning to have a positive impact on individual progress and is raising the achievement of writing so that it is line with other subjects. Across the curriculum good experiences are being identified which enable learners to explore spirituality.

Parents describe the school community as 'a family with a protecting hug,' which includes links with the local Anglican church and neighbouring Christian faith denominations. These links have enhanced the whole school family bond and enabled the Christian character to grow and develop.

Pupils know that it is important to learn about Christianity and other religions and that what they learn gives meaning to their everyday life. They clearly enjoy religious education in which they demonstrate respect for other faith traditions and an understanding of Christianity. They have a growing awareness of the diverse nature of British society; however, their knowledge of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is not fully developed.

Pupils understand the importance of giving to charitable projects, through which they experience the Christian values of compassion and responsibility. Pupils are keen to help those less fortunate than themselves through fundraising for a variety of charities both local and abroad. One pupil said, 'if we can we should make life a little easier for those for whom it is difficult.' These activities strongly support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of worship are carefully planned to reflect Anglican traditions through singing, Christian teaching, reflection and prayer. This makes them distinctively special times in the school day. A two year rolling programme incorporates not only the three core values of the school but also fifteen church school values. This has strengthened the spiritual development of pupils. Themes for the term are based on Christian festivals in the church year, a key Bible story, values and topical events. One pupil said, 'as Christians we enjoy stories with morals. We heard a story about a King who forgave a debt, this linked with our values of kindness and forgiveness.' Bible stories are a regular part of worship and those focusing on the life of Jesus are central to planning. This has enabled pupils to develop their understanding of Christian life and the centrality of Jesus to worship.

Collective worship makes a good contribution to the life of the school through its promotion of Christian values and the opportunity it gives for pupils and adults to reflect and pray. Pupils' attitude to collective worship reflects the good quality of daily worship and its impact on their spiritual and moral development. Learners' appreciation of the nature of the Trinity has been developed through prayer and reflection which they discuss with some understanding.

The monitoring of collective worship by pupils and governors has developed since the previous inspection. Feedback from this monitoring has identified areas to improve. An innovative example has been the use of pupil prayers during church services. Prayers are categorized by pupils through the use of coloured paper as prayers of reverence and prayers when in need. They are put onto a prayer board and after they have been used in collective worship, are put in a prayer book which is kept in a central area for individual reflection. The spiritual development of pupils has been strengthened through this development.

The variety of visitors who contribute to collective worship includes representatives from a wide range of Christian communities. Their contribution is valued by parents, pupils and staff as it enriches pupils' understanding of different Christian traditions. When services are held at the local church, parents say these are well attended which reflects the important place worship holds in the hearts of the school community. Although pupils enjoy contributing to worship and some groups have planned and led services, they need to be more regularly involved in these aspects.

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

The headteacher and school leaders have ensured that the Christian ethos is moving forward so that it meets the current expectations of what makes a good church school. She has the full support of the staff and governors who share her vision and commitment to develop the Christian character. This is clearly demonstrated in the level of Christian care shown to all pupils and their families. One parent said, 'on our first visit around the school, pupils had already made a welcome card for my daughter.'

The school has made good progress towards addressing all the development areas identified at the previous inspection. There are now useful systems in place to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the school as a church school and these have led to effective school improvement planning. The coordinator for religious education is new to role and through support from the headteacher has already made improvements to practice. The leadership of collective worship has developed since the previous inspection as a result of greater involvement of pupils and governors in its evaluation. This led directly to the use of pupil prayers in collective worship and an improved understanding of different reasons for prayer. Religious education and collective worship improvements are part of the whole school improvement plan. This demonstrates leaders' understanding of their important contribution to learners' behaviour, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

Preparation for future Christian leadership is supported through training provided by the diocese. However, this training has not been sufficiently utilised to enable all leaders, including governors, to fully develop their skills to challenge and support the school at a strategic level.

Links with the local church are strong. Pupils and parents regard services at the church as an integral part of the life of the school. Parents appreciate the termly communion services and their relevance to the pupils. One described work with the church as, 'God is cradling our children and nurturing them.' The rector has quickly become a part of the life of the school. She makes a significant contribution to regular acts of worship as well as her commitment to the governing body and pastoral support for the staff.

SIAMS report March 2017 Kirkby-la-Thorpe Church of England Primary Academy Sleaford NG34 9NU