

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Christ Church Upper Armley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Theaker Lane, Upper Armley, Leeds, LS12 3NU

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Satisfactory

Diocese

Leeds

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Leeds

Date of inspection

15 March 2018

Date of last inspection

13 June 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Controlled Primary 108004

Headteacher

Debra Simpson

Inspector's name and number

Lorraine Hanson 769

School context

This is smaller than average-sized primary school with 198 pupils on roll. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above that of most schools nationally. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is below average. The overall effectiveness of the school was judged inadequate by Ofsted in October 2017. The interim headteacher has been in post since September 2017. There is a new senior leadership team in place and a high proportion of the teaching staff have been appointed during the last year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church Upper Armley as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The school's Christian values are at the heart of the school and include trust, friendship, service, compassion, respect and justice. These values are fully supported by staff and understood by pupils.
- The emphasis on these values has had a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning, and there is some evidence of early impact on progress and achievement, although this requires further improvement.
- Relationships at all levels in school are strong, mutually respectful and built on Christian values. Pupils behave well and show consideration and respect for each other and towards adults.
- Collective worship is central to the life of the school, it is valued by the whole school community and it has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that there is sufficient focus on the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics to enable all pupils to flourish in their academic development.
- Implement a robust cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review of the school as a church school, involving a range of stakeholders, to promote further improvement.
- Ensure systems for assessment and tracking pupil progress for religious education are embedded in order to accurately inform planning and teaching to continue to improve pupil achievement.

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

The school's Christian values are at the heart of the school and include trust, friendship, service, compassion, respect and justice. These values are fully supported by staff and understood by pupils. The emphasis on these values has had a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning, and there is evidence of early impact on progress and achievement, although this requires further improvement. Too few pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics and progress in writing and mathematics was well below that of other schools nationally by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2017. Outcomes at the end of early years and Key Stage 1 in 2017 were inadequate. Improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are promoting improving standards. The school's internal tracking data shows that standards are rising and most pupils are now making expected progress academically. School leaders, staff and governors speak about the positive effects on pupils' attitudes to learning and progress, due to the school's renewed focus on the Christian values. The school proudly presents its Christian character through, for example, an inspiring quote from Joshua 1.9 displayed in a main corridor, which encourages trust in God. Relationships at all levels in school are strong, mutually respectful and built on Christian values. Pupils' behaviour is good, they show courtesy and respect for each other and towards adults. Pupils develop positive social skills, by putting Christian values into practice, showing care for one another. For example, Year 6 pupils work with early years children as buddies, helping them to settle into school. Random acts of kindness are encouraged and rewarded. The 'Citizen of the Week' is awarded to pupils who demonstrate the Christian values. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence has been promoted through developing their understanding of the Christian values. As a result, pupils now demonstrate self-belief, with an 'I can' attitude to learning, enhancing their personal development and application in lessons. The provision, uptake and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is monitored to ensure they receive the support they need to promote their academic and personal development. A six-week programme 'Happy to be Me' has led to vulnerable pupils' improved application to learning. Spirituality is understood by school leaders and nurtured through the Christian ethos of the school, collective worship, reflective areas, prayer stations and through the curriculum. Pupils respond well to the opportunities on offer and are developing their ability to express their thoughts and feelings in this regard. Pupils are provided with strong support for their emotional well-being in school. 'Worry boxes' are available so pupils can readily share any concerns, which are followed up by staff. Breakfast club is offered free to all pupils. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and most attend well. Overall attendance rates are in line with national averages, however persistent absence is above the national average. Pupils engage with moral issues with empathy and compassion. A visitor from the St George's Crypt charity motivated pupils to initiate a fundraising event to support homeless people in Leeds. This is an inclusive school where the wealth of cultural and religious diversity represented in the school and community is valued and respected by pupils and the school. Parents from a range of faith backgrounds came to read stories from their religious backgrounds on World Book Day. Cultural food events are well supported by parents and the community. A local Imam talked to pupils about Islam. These events promote community cohesion and enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show they understand Christianity as a world-wide multi-cultural faith and this addresses a development point from the last inspection. Pupils say they usually enjoy religious education (RE) and it often makes them think. Pupils learn the main teachings, beliefs and practices of Christianity, as well as other world religions in RE. They say RE is important because they learn about the Christian values and respect for other people's religions. In a Key Stage 1 RE lesson pupils showed respect for diverse faith communities. Two Muslim pupils confidently led a group each of their peers, talking about and demonstrating Mendi patterns and how to wear a headscarf (hijab). The other pupils listened with interest and eagerly participated in the activities. In a Key Stage 2 RE lesson pupils were learning about the Muslim prophet Yunus and reflected on the feelings of the prophet and how they could show patience in their own lives. RE contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils work RE has been monitored and evaluated by senior leaders this academic year. They give feedback to staff and the next steps for future developments. The RE curriculum is enhanced through visits to places of worship, including the church and a Sikh Temple. Recent changes to the RE curriculum, systems for assessment and tracking of pupil progress have resulted in improving standards in RE.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily collective worship is central to the life of the school and valued by the whole school community. Members of the school community express the importance of collective worship to them. A pupil remarked, 'Collective worship is important because we come together as a giant school family'. School leaders say it sets a positive tone for each school day. Pupils come into worship respectfully to calm music. A key feature at the opening to worship is the lighting of candles and pupils give responses to prompts regarding the Trinity. The Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is a regular feature in worship and pupils show a growing understanding of this as they progress through school. A pupil commented, 'God is in three parts, that are all God', and another added, 'The Holy Spirit is with us, all around us and in us'. Pupils participate with enjoyment and reverence in collective worship and show a good understanding of Christian teachings, traditions and festivals. A group of pupils confidently

presented a dramatized reading of the Prodigal Son during a collective worship on forgiveness. Pupils reflected on the feelings of the characters and how this parable helps them to live their lives. Pupils are engaged and keen to participate in collective worship, including by talking to a partner and responding to questions. The whole school sing with joy and enthusiasm. They know a wide range of worship songs. An early years child was motivated to follow up collective worship by making a tissue paper rainbow, after participating in a collective worship about this. The collective worship overview is planned by the headteacher and the vicar. Themes include the school's Christian values, festivals, teachings and Bible stories. Two Christian values are focused on each half term and are followed up in classes. There is a clear structure to worship, which includes a welcome, learning, responding and reflection. Collective worship impacts positively on pupils' attitudes, their behaviour and the relationships across the whole school. Spiritual development is promoted through opportunities for stillness, reflection and prayer in worship. The school prayer and the Lord's prayer are displayed and are regularly offered in worship. Biblical material is regularly included and pupils are able to relate Bible stories to their own lives. For example, a pupil commented, 'Zacchaeus the tax collector was a very bad person, but he changed his ways and Jesus forgave him, so if we are sorry we will be forgiven'. There are a range of adults who lead worship including school leaders, staff, the vicar, curate, church youth worker and visitors. Pupils take responsibility for planning and leading aspects of worship and church services, with support from staff. School services are held in church to celebrate the main Christian festivals and for Year 6 leavers. Services are well attended by parents. Reflective areas in each classroom, the prayer stations in public areas, the spiritual garden and the curriculum offer opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually. Reflection and prayer are prompted in many of the reflective areas, with means to write personal prayers if pupils wish. A prayer mat and a compass are readily available for Muslim pupils who wish to pray. Class prayer books contain collections of pupils' prayers, which pupils say they like to read. Collective prayers are regularly offered during the school day, for example at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Pupils' develop a growing spiritual awareness as they proceed through school. A pupil commented, 'When I pray I feel warm inside', and another, 'It gives me a feeling of peace and calm when I pray'. School leaders evaluate collective worship. Governors regularly attend collective worship and give a written evaluation of their views. The views of pupils are gathered through staff interviewing small groups.

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

The interim headteacher leads with vision and passion within a Christian context. There is a united and committed approach by school leaders, governors and staff, which is bringing about improvements to the effectiveness of the school, as a church school, following a period of instability. The Ofsted inspection of October 2017 found that leadership had been ineffective overtime and there had been a lack of accountability. This impacted negatively on pupils' achievements. Members of the joint review group have a realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for development and have been instrumental in beginning to address major failings in school improvement planning, assessment procedures and holding leaders accountable. Rapidly improving systems and procedures are resulting in better teaching, learning and assessment. which supports the school's findings through assessment and monitoring during this year. Governors play an active part in school life and take up opportunities to participate in training to support their roles. There are strong and enduring links between the school and Christ Church, who work together to meet the spiritual and social needs of the school and local community. The vicar, youth worker and curate give generously of their time to school, providing pastoral, practical and prayerful support for pupils, staff and families. The church youth worker, with the support of school staff provides an after-school club, which focuses on Christian craft activities. The church youth club and Messy Church, which are run by the youth worker, are well attended by pupils. Diocesan support is provided through the school adviser and professional development courses. The school works closely with other schools in the Armley and Farnley clusters to the mutual benefit of staff and pupils. The three development points from the last inspection have been addressed through opportunity to reflect, discuss and ask big question, which is now built into the curriculum. Opportunity for pupils to engage in personal prayer and reflection is available across the school day, particularly through circle time and the reflective areas. However, a cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review of church school aspects, on which to build future developments, is not yet fully in place. Parents are supportive of the school and there is an active Parent Teacher Association. Parents acknowledge there have been substantial changes in the school recently, about which they are positive. Parents say they feel that their children are now making strong progress, which is supported by the school's findings through assessment and monitoring during this year. A parent remarked, 'I appreciate the school as a church school as it provides a better view of life'. Parents say they appreciate the opportunity to be involved in stay and play, inspire workshops, collective worship and services in church. Collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements.