

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

### Dunnington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Pear Tree Lane, Dunnington, York YO19 5QG

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|--|--------------------|
| <b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>      | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| <b>Diocese</b>                             | <b>York</b>        |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade            | Outstanding        |
| Local authority                            | York               |
| Date of inspection                         | 1 February 2018    |
| Date of last inspection                    | March 2013         |
| Type of school and unique reference number | VC Primary 121530  |
| Headteacher                                | Caroline Hancy     |
| Inspector's name and number                | Judy Jones 797     |

#### School context

The school serves the village of Dunnington on the eastern edge of York. At present there are 260 pupils aged 4 to 11, making the school broadly average in size. Currently it has voluntary controlled status but it will become part of a multi-academy trust on 1 March 2018. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion entitled to support through Pupil Premium funding. Most children are of White British heritage but there are a few of other faiths and cultures. The head teacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection.

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

- Children thrive in the school's Christian environment, so that they make good progress and most achieve above average standards in their academic work. Children with special needs of any kind are well supported and also make good progress.
- Behaviour and relationships are excellent throughout the school because the life of the school is underpinned by the values of forgiveness, care and tolerance. These are closely linked to Christian teaching and respected by pupils and adults alike.
- Excellent links with the church, locally and through the diocese, contribute strongly to the school's aim 'to be the best that we can, in an environment based on Christian values.'

#### Areas to improve

- Involve more pupils in planning and leading worship, to enable a wide range of pupils to express their commitment to worship through more active contributions.

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

Dunnington primary school was judged to be outstanding at the previous SIAMS inspection and has maintained this high standard while striving to improve further. Christian values of forgiveness, tolerance and care are fundamental to the life of the school. They are closely illustrated by examples from the Bible, and particularly from the life of Jesus, and are well understood by pupils. They can explain the importance of these values by saying that they are 'rules that Jesus wants us to keep.' For instance, they talk with maturity about the importance of forgiveness in our lives as illustrated by the story of Joseph forgiving his brothers instead of taking revenge on them. Pupils readily apply the message to incidents in their own lives when forgiveness has enabled them to settle arguments, and friendships have flourished.

The emphasis on Christian values promotes an ethos that encourages pupils to grow in confidence and develop stable relationships. Pupils look after each other, for example through 'playground buddies.' They see this as an important aspect of their Christian value 'care.' They enjoy coming to school and working hard. Standards are above average, attendance is high and exclusions virtually unknown. Children with particular needs are identified accurately and they make good progress through the special provision that is made when needed. Tolerance and care are evident in the respectful way children and adults treat each other. Pupils from other faiths say they feel their beliefs are respected, and they in turn respect the Christian faith of their fellows. For example, a group posed the question 'do you have to be a Christian to come to this school' and others replied, 'no, because we respect all faiths so they would be happy here.' Religious education (RE) contributes substantially to pupils' knowledge of their own and other world religions. Their knowledge of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is good because RE is well taught, with lessons that interest pupils through a wide range of activities, while retaining rigour and challenge. RE supports spiritual development by challenging pupils to think about big questions such as the meaning of 'blessed' in the Beatitudes and the importance of special places in our lives when talking about visits to the local church.

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

Collective worship has a central and significant place in the school day. Excellent planning is by the senior leader with responsibility for RE and worship, who makes good use of support from the diocese. Worship includes a wide range of formats including regular visits from the vicar and other clergy and speakers from other faiths. Themes and topics reinforce the school's Christian values and are based on Christian festivals, seasons and secular events such as International Women's Day. Consequently, pupils are knowledgeable about the Church calendar and of the place of Christianity as a world religion.

Pupils enjoy lively worship led by senior teachers or visitors. All are attentive and eager to contribute and answer questions. Older pupils willingly assume responsibility for preparing the hall for worship and managing the audio-visual equipment. Pupils learn about Christian, and particularly Anglican, symbols such as candles, the Cross, and ecclesiastical colours that are used according to the season. Pupils take the symbols seriously and lighting the candle at the start of worship is has a special meaning for many as representing the presence of Jesus, the light of the world. Music is used extensively, both as an introduction to set the scene and through hymns and songs. Songs with actions are particularly popular and pupils talk about them enthusiastically.

Prayer and reflection are central to the structure of all worship and pupils are respectful throughout. Pupils are used to saying formal prayers such as the Lord's Prayer and informal ones in worship and this enables them to be confident about writing their own prayers for personal reasons at other times. Although speakers from other faiths visit, worship is fundamentally Christian in nature and contributes significantly to pupils' knowledge of the Bible and to Christian concepts such as the idea of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A group of pupil volunteers contributes to planning, leading and evaluating worship. It is clear from pupils' comments and their evaluations that they enjoy this role and develop confidence as a result. Other pupils see how much their friends benefit and many others are keen to be part of the group and share the experience of contributing to the school's ethos.

Church festivals such as Christmas and Harvest Festival and some RE lessons, such as learning about marriage and baptism, are held in the parish church. Consequently, pupils are familiar with the building and its symbols and see it as an important part of their everyday lives. Parents know they are welcome at the Thursday worship and church festivals where there is often 'standing room only.'

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

Excellent leadership by the headteacher and governors has secured outstanding standards as a church school for many years. The school's stated vision, 'Growing and learning together, aiming to be the best that we can be, in an environment based on Christian values' is realised daily because the headteacher and other adults lead by example. New staff are well supported through training and guidance. Consequently, they quickly absorb the ethos and help

to maintain pupils' high academic standards and excellent attitudes and behaviour. The overarching vision enables the school to support families and individuals in times of stress, such as difficulties forming relationships or dealing with bereavement. The worship group was established in response to the focus recommended in the previous SIAMS report. The impact of the group is evident, in the way so many others aspire to lead worship.

Governors are deeply committed to the school and are effective in supporting the school and holding it to high standards as well as ensuring the school meets statutory requirements including those for RE and worship. Excellent planning for both is reinforced by close monitoring and careful evaluation. There is effective training, particularly for new initiatives, such as the introduction of the latest Agreed Syllabus for RE and the Understanding Christianity resource. The headteacher and the senior leader responsible for RE and worship together ensure that the church school aspects have sufficient status that they underpin all the work of the school. Foundation governors are diligent in evaluating the Church school aspects of the school such as worship. Professional development and training for teachers ensures that they are well prepared for future leadership of church schools. Partnerships with the church at local and diocesan levels are excellent and greatly enrich pupils' experience. Partnership with the local community is also strong and the school website offers good advice as well as a welcome to parents and carers to attend some worship sessions and church services. The headteacher and leadership team, as well as governors, work hard to develop links with other communities to reinforce pupils' learning from other cultures.

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