

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

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| <b>Slaithwaite Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School</b> |                                  |                         |            |
| <b>Address</b>   | Holme Lane, Slaithwaite, HD7 5UG |                         |            |
| <b>Date of inspection</b>  | 19 June 2019                     | <b>Status of school</b> | VC primary |
| <b>Diocese</b>   | Leeds                            | <b>URN</b>              | 107711     |

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| <b>Overall Judgement</b>    | <b>How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?</b> | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Requires Improvement</b> |
| <b>Additional Judgement</b> | <b>The impact of collective worship</b>   | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Good</b>                 |

### School context

Slaithwaite is a primary school with 170 pupils on roll. The school has a low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is in line with national averages. The school has had stable leadership and staffing since the last inspection although the longstanding chair of governors has recently retired.

### The school's Christian vision

Our Christian faith is important to us all and we strive to ensure that Christian values and themes permeate our daily work and the experiences we provide for everyone. Loving thy neighbour as thyself is a strong message we uphold, along with creating a culture which encourages and supports everyone to develop their spirituality and ability to reflect upon themselves as human beings.

### Key findings

- During a period of challenge school leaders have not rigorously evaluated the school's effectiveness as a church school using the recent developments in church school education.
- Through its Christian vision the school creates a culture in which all children flourish. Consequently, pupils are confident and progress is above national average, with a high proportion of pupils working at greater depth.
- Pupils actively 'love thy neighbour as themselves', engaging in social action which brings immediate benefit to their neighbours and encourages the sense that they can make a difference locally and globally by challenging injustices.
- School leaders have prioritised the development of pupils spiritual and mental wellbeing. Pupils talk about their feelings and know how to resolve conflicts when they occur.
- The school's Christian values permeate all areas of school life and are particularly exemplary in the support provided to vulnerable pupils and their families.

### Areas for development

- Develop an effective partnership working with the diocese so that school leaders have a strong and secure understanding of church school distinctiveness, which they share with all members of the school community.
- Further develop the rigour and effectiveness of governors' analytical evaluation of the school's in order to prioritise church school distinctiveness in the context of a clear Christian vision.
- Ensure that pupils develop an age appropriate theological understanding of Christian beliefs and practices through the revision and development of the RE curriculum.
- Promote a deeper understanding of the liturgical basis of collective worship to support pupils in planning, leading and effectively evaluating collective worship.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

### Inspection findings

School leaders have welcomed the support of foundation governors, church members and retired clergy through a challenging time in the school's history. Governors have been proactive in their support of the headteacher and assiduously sought to ensure the mental wellbeing of all staff. Together the headteacher and governing body have maintained strong leadership for the school. However, governors have not sufficiently challenged the school's progress as a church school. Although they have made regular monitoring visits these have not been sufficiently rigorous or analytical. This is because they have not maintained an up to date knowledge of developments in church school education. They are, however, committed to promoting their Christian ethos and have maintained a vision for the school as a church school.

The school's values of equality, empathy, compassion, understanding, forgiveness and respect permeate all aspects of school life. Subsequently, relationships are nurturing and mutually supportive. This creates an extremely positive setting in which pupils flourish. A high proportion of pupils make progress in line with national expectations and many are working at greater depth. Meticulous monitoring ensures that pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) are effectively supported to make progress in line with or above their own goals. The curriculum is structured around pupils' interests. Consequently, they enjoy learning and attendance is above national average.

School leaders make spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing a very high priority. Pupils enjoy times of mindfulness which help them to be calm and resilient. They talk confidently about their feelings and resolve their differences independently. They are mature enough to recognise when they are not ready for reconciliation and avoid escalating situations by walking away. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through the many opportunities to learn outside the classroom. The inspirational environment supports pupils' understanding and appreciation of the natural world as part of God's creation. The curriculum, leadership opportunities and engagement with the local council equip pupils to be passionate and articulate advocates for environmental and social change. Pupils feel empowered to express their opinions and concerns through their very active school council. They confidently initiate projects which they share with their families and the local community. Older pupils talk about this in the context of Jesus making a sacrifice. They identify their own sacrifices as supporting the local foodbank, caring for refugees and reducing the plastic they use.

Collective worship enhances pupils' understanding of social action in the context of Christian teaching. Effective leadership fluidly links familiar stories to contemporary themes underpinned with biblical teaching. Pupils apply these teachings to their daily lives, resolving to help others and be inclusive because, 'we love our neighbour, that's what Jesus taught us.' Music has a high profile in worship and contemporary songs promote pupils' appreciation of God as 'amazing'. They feel that prayer is relevant and important because 'Jesus is always there for us.' They talk comfortably about the times when they have prayed and the people and situations that they pray for. Pupils know about Christian festivals because they participate and lead worship in church and at school. Although they have regular contact with visitors from neighbouring churches they do not appreciate the liturgical structure of worship. The worship group make a confident contribution to collective worship through plays and dramatized Bible stories. However, their capacity to take a stronger lead in worship is not fully exploited.

Pupils have a strong sense of equality and inclusion because these are central to an effective personal, social and health (PSHE) curriculum. The PSHE leader participates in local network groups which support further curriculum development which includes learning about different lifestyles. The PSHE and RE curriculum mutually re-enforce pupils' appreciation and understanding of religious and cultural diversity. Opportunities to meet people from different faiths enhances their understanding of the relevance of faith to the people in, and beyond, their community. Regular contact with members of their local church supports their growing understanding of Christianity as a living world faith. Together they extend their vision to 'love their neighbour' and support the Mustard Seed project in Uganda. This, and regular visits from the congregation, fosters an important link between church and school. However, opportunities for pupils to critically engage with deeper Christian theology are limited. Consequently, pupils are not consistently confident to talk about important aspects of Christian belief and practice. Because RE has a high profile in the school there is regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Systems for assessment are established and suggest that pupil progress is in line with other subjects. However, school leaders have not recognised that the curriculum lacks the rigour and challenge to promote learning at greater depth.

School leaders promote the inclusion and wellbeing of vulnerable pupils and those who have SEND. They appreciate that the demography of the area is changing and an increasing proportion of families suffer from hidden deprivation, which influences wellbeing and attainment. The headteacher's advocacy for vulnerable pupils

and their families ensures that they access multi-agency support thus supporting their integration into school. The school's close relationship with the Virtual School ensures that looked after children and their families receive excellent support. Staff are trained in a wide range of strategies to ensure that pupils' emotional needs are speedily recognised and successfully managed. Informed and structured support means that pupils develop their independence and resilience and make positive transitions to secondary schools. There is a harmonious atmosphere in which pupils learn and play alongside their peers with an innate acceptance of difference. As one pupil said, 'We all grow, we just grow in different ways at different times.'

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| Headteacher                 | Elaine Bradley       |
| Inspector's name and number | Geraldine Cooper 696 |