

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holme Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Holme, Peterborough, PE7 3PB

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Ely

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Cambridgeshire

Date of inspection

17 January 2018

Date of last inspection

22 February 2013

Type of school and unique reference number

Primary Voluntary Controlled 110816

Headteacher

Tamara Allen

Inspector's name and number

Judith Ruff 528

School context

Holme is a smaller than average primary school, currently with 109 pupils on roll. Approximately 50% of pupils come from Holme with others travelling from surrounding villages. 15% of pupils receive special educational needs support, in line with the national average. 11% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. Since the previous inspection there has been a new headteacher appointed. She is currently supporting another local church school as an interim executive headteacher. The church of St Giles is opposite the school.

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

- The embedded and explicit Christian values make a strong contribution to both pupils' academic and personal growth and greatly enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the ways in which they are actively encouraged to permeate throughout the life of the school community.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They demonstrate a strong sense of both responsibility and service to their school community, but also to the wider community, where their sense of Christian duty to respond to the needs of others less fortunate is active and committed.
- Collective worship is both inclusive and inspirational. It challenges every member of the school community to respond to 'What would Jesus do?' through prayers, reflection and actions that demonstrate the values of love, forgiveness and compassion.
- Strong, confident and committed leadership demonstrated daily by the headteacher and her senior leadership team ensures that a Christian vision and associated values guide all decision making. There is a outstanding sense of valuing all as precious children of God.

Areas to improve

- Increase clarity in terms of a Christian vision statement for the school, which is theologically underpinned and takes account of both the Church of England and diocesan visions for education.
- Build pupils' knowledge of the diversity found within the Christian church, so that they understand that, although practices and buildings may differ amongst denominations, they are all a valued part of the Christian heritage locally, nationally and internationally.
- Increase the capacity for all governors to contribute to the strategic development of the school as a church school by ensuring that discussions on Christian distinctiveness at full governor meetings are regular and comprehensive.

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

In this outstanding church school, Christian values are made explicit and are deeply embedded within the life of the school. This is achieved most successfully through thought provoking stunning displays around the site and good communication with parents and prospective parents about the core aims and values that the school espouses. There is a tangible sense of pride in what the school is achieving, by all members of the school community, in nurturing, guiding and valuing all as a precious child of God, each with their own unique set of talents, personal characteristics and the ability to succeed with their learning. Cohort sizes are small and achievement does fluctuate from year to year, depending on the number of pupils with additional needs. There is no doubt of the school's ambition and aspiration for pupils. The strong focus on building skills for learning, such as resilience, resourcefulness, relationships and reflection, dovetails very well with the chosen Christian values and is very successfully raising levels of perseverance, confidence and self-esteem. A recent initiative 'Achievement for All' (AFA) is building good, trusting relationships with families where barriers to learning need to be explored and reduced. A family worker supporting a cluster of local schools, also provides a 'drop in' service which advises on and signposts parents to help with emerging needs around transition, anxiety and mental health issues. Pupils have a highly developed sense of spirituality through a well thought through enquiry based curriculum, which challenges injustice and inequality of opportunity. A link with a Columbian charity has led to pupils understanding more deeply about the life experiences of their Christian counterparts across the world. Good attendance is rewarded by money paid to each class, which is then collected and frequently donated to this charity to further its work in educating children in less fortunate areas. Pupils have a strong sense of compassion and this shows itself in acts of spontaneous generosity, such as giving their pocket money to the homeless or raising funds for a cancer charity. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are thoughtful, considerate and reflective. They seek out opportunities to serve others and the school provides them with a wide range of responsibilities such as reading ambassadors, worship and play leaders, 'truly trusted' and school councillors. They speak with levels of maturity which demonstrate their understanding of the Gospel message to bring hope and love and to put others' needs before your own. Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural global faith is developing very well through the religious education (RE) unit on Vellore in Southern India, visits from a Rwandan bishop and the Christian charity in Columbia. Their understanding of diversity within different Christian denominations is under-developed. RE makes a highly significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. It both excites and challenges pupils and plays a very substantial part in their understanding of other world faiths. It enables them to compare beliefs and ideas and relate these to their own experiences of a Christian community in action.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

It is clear that in this school collective worship has a highly valued and significant part to play in enabling all members of the school community to revisit their core beliefs and values, to live a life based on Christ's teachings and to use the Bible as a source of wisdom and inspiration. There is no doubt that collective worship is both inclusive and inspirational. It challenges every member present to respond to 'What would Jesus do?' As one staff member said, 'I am humbled when I hear the children's responses'. Another said, 'It encourages us all to reflect and gives us a dialogue to use with the children'. Staff spoke about the placing of collective worship before morning break, so that the key messages from each act of worship could filter out into other areas of school life, securing harmonious relationships and the reinforcing of the Bible messages. The worship on the day of the inspection was excellent. It was both thought provoking and challenging. Using a passage from Ecclesiastes it challenged modern society's fixation with money and outward appearances and contrasted this to God's response, which looks at our inward qualities, what is in our heart. The leader took the pupils through a very powerful thought provoking exercise and pupils were not afraid to change their initial perceptions in the light of what they heard during the worship session. Pupils' knowledge of Bible stories is very strong and they readily link these to their core school values. Opportunities for spiritual and moral reflection are very well developed and lead to pupils exhibiting a powerful social conscience to improve life chances for others. Personal prayer and reflection are well-developed across the school, supported by prayer spaces and opportunities both inside school and in external areas to be quiet and think. School council members are keen to rejuvenate a central prayer space because they can see that it is not used as fully as it could be and they are keen to enable all who wish to have access for a quiet and private place to pray. Worship has a clear structure and good efforts are made to ensure that there is a worshipful atmosphere set up for pupils to enter. A beautiful bespoke worship table is central with a lit candle and a set of frontals in liturgical colours which have been designed by pupils. Pupils enter quietly and respectfully with an air of anticipation. Pupil worship leaders have been in place for two years now. They have learned a significant amount about why worship is important to Christians and what the key components in worship are. They are proud of their role in worship, are determined to keep the worship interactive and all present engaged with the central message. 'We know what children like, so that helps us to plan things that will interest everyone'. The excellent role models of adult worship leaders shines through in what the pupils see as important opportunities to raise awareness of those in need,

whether in war torn parts of the world or closer to home through support for local food banks. They talk about the bringing of hope and help as 'filling up a bucket, but unkind acts empty the bucket'. Pupils' understanding of the Trinity is at an age appropriate level and this is reinforced through the singing of the Grace at the end of church services. Links with the church are strong and its close proximity to the school mean that it is regularly used for services at festival times, led by both the vicar and the accredited lay minister. Parents are very appreciative of opportunities to join the school community for collective worship. They speak of the school not being afraid to support pupils through difficult and challenging world events, such as terrorist attacks, where collectively coming together to pray for victims and world peace is both powerful and supportive. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is strong and regular. Pupils are encouraged to add their thoughts to the collective worship reflection book. This supports the linking of the school's core values to the content of worship sessions. Staff members speak of how the strength of the Christian message, as shared through Bible stories, has increased over the years. They are particularly impressed and pleased with the pupil worship leaders, observing how they have grown in their ability to plan and organise worship themes. They can see how excellent modelling from adults of worship leadership has inspired and influenced the pupils in their conduct and engagement of sharing the given themes with their peers. Governors monitor conscientiously and support the improvement of provision through their reflective comments around visual images, meeting the wide age range and responding to pupils' requests that they try leading worship in the future.

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

In this school all leaders consistently and confidently live out a vision rooted in distinctively Christian values which they are proud to own. However, at present the vision statement does not have sufficient clarity to be readily understood by all stakeholders. It lacks theological roots and does not take into account the Church of England and diocesan visions for education. Nevertheless, the strong, confident and committed leadership demonstrated daily by the headteacher and her senior leadership team ensure that a Christian vision and associated values guides all decision making. There is an outstanding sense of valuing all as precious children of God. The rigorous and detailed school development plan exemplifies the thorough understanding that both senior leaders and governors have of the school's performance. The innovative and creative ways that are sought to inspire and teach children crucial skills for life and learning, underpinned by Gospel values and teachings, are very impressive. Pupils love the extra-curricular activities, such as 'Boxercise' and BMX to build determination and resilience. Self-evaluation is accurate and there are strong efforts made to glean the views of all stakeholders, who respond thoughtfully and constructively based on their understanding and appreciation of the school's work. Senior leaders and staff recognise the importance of spreading the Christian vision across the whole curriculum and the impact that this has on pupils' knowledge, understanding and attitudes to others, both within the school and beyond, is very commendable. They consider carefully their decisions and actions in the light of Gospel teachings and understand the ways in which these influence 'how we go about our daily business'. Links with the church are strong. The weekly 'Bible Explorers' club held in the school is popular and led by church members. The vicar has an important and greatly valued pastoral role within the school. Members of the church congregation have faithfully supported the school through playing the organ at church services or taking on foundation governor responsibilities. Governors do place great importance on the church school status of the school. However, responsibilities and discussions around church school distinctiveness are confined to a small group of foundation governors, who do not always have sufficient opportunities to report back to the full governing body. This limits the capacity of all governors to contribute to the strategic development of the school as a church school because discussions on aspects of Christian distinctiveness at full governor meetings are not regular and comprehensive. The leadership of both RE and collective worship are extremely effective. Both areas are given high status and priority within the school. Both are inspirational and transforming in the ways in which they teach pupils the importance of faith and belief in people's lives and how this shapes their actions and relationships with other people. The excellence of the senior leadership team has been recognised by the local authority and diocese. Leaders have been asked to support other local schools, both with school improvement generally and specifically around developing a high quality RE curriculum. The potential of current leaders as future leaders of church schools has been recognised and supported through training and development opportunities, but is not yet planned for strategically. Links with the diocese are strong; training is accessed by staff, diocesan advice has been offered through a written SIAMS health check and cathedral days are taken up to strengthen ties further. The headteacher has sought out advice and support from an outstanding church school leader to enable her to discuss and share good practice.