

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

### Leven Voluntary Controlled Primary School

South Street, Leven, Beverley HU17 7NX	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>York</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Date of inspection	10 November 2016
Date of last inspection	20 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	VC / Primary 117981
Headteacher	Andrew Dolman
Inspector's name and number	Jane Kent 873

#### School context

Leven Voluntary Controlled Primary school is a maintained small village primary school serving a community whose children are predominantly of White British heritage. The number on roll is currently 154. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is significantly lower than the national average at 5.8% whilst the percentage of those with special educational needs support or an educational care plan is generally in line with national figures. Although the school has experienced recent changes in its staffing and governance, the headteacher has been in post for ten years.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Leven Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Consistency of and commitment to the distinctive ethos across the school ensures all members are aware of and act upon the shared values.
- All members demonstrate and articulate a personal commitment to each other which enables a strong sense of security, resilience and confidence.
- Care is given to secure transition for learners with value placed on difference, diversity and personal strength and talents enabling consistently sustained high quality achievements for all groups of children.
- The place of worship and the involvement of the church is valued and recognised as an important aspect of the overall effectiveness of the school.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure the teachings and life of Jesus are explicitly articulated as central to the Christian values of the school in order to support all school members in understanding how and why the school's values are distinctive.
- Include teaching about the person of Jesus Christ in collective worship and how Christianity, with particular emphasis on Anglican traditions, uses symbols and practices to understand his important place in worship.
- Increase the regularity and robustness of monitoring and evaluation for collective worship so that it informs planning more effectively and quickens the pace of improvements.

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

The Christian character of the school has a significant impact on all aspects of learners' development personally and academically. Christian values of care, love and kindness are clearly expressed although individual values and their association with the life of Christ are yet to be made explicit. Staff are consistent in their view that the school's values are implicit in everything they do. A member of the support team said the values are 'an unconscious ethos of the school which is nurturing and caring' whilst an experienced teacher said of the ethos 'it is almost a habit'. Children are clearly nurtured and cared for and adults are equally valued and supported including staff, parents, governors. Staff believe their individual strengths and differences are celebrated and encouraged which in turn impacts positively and successfully on how the school meets the individual needs of children. Attendance remains high year on year. In rare circumstances of persistent absence families are provided with individual support increasing attendance for individual children.

Parents say they are well supported and that their children feel secure and 'can be themselves' including those with special educational needs. Parents are confident in the school team with one parent saying 'issues that arise are dealt with, concerns are dealt with immediately'. The school is now focussing on three core values of friendship, thankfulness and compassion which have been chosen by the parents.

A rich curriculum is provided with strong cohesion and secure transition from year group to year group. Children in all age groups are given appropriate learning activities that encourage them to think deeply about people's actions and impact on others in both an individual and wider context. For example, whilst learning about Remembrance Year 5 children demonstrated empathy for the feelings of soldiers in the trenches as they considered 'What is it about Christmas that could stop a war?' whilst a Reception child said 'because they died for us so we can live in this world' when discussing why we value Remembrance. The Christian character of the school demonstrated through its approach to the curriculum results in standards and progress for all groups of children being in line with, or above national standards which is consistently sustained year on year. Parents and staff articulate children's enjoyment of learning and children themselves talk enthusiastically about their learning and are engaged and motivated.

Children recognise the importance of RE. They make links between cultural and religious traditions and say they enjoy RE as it helps them understand differences and be respectful. For example, Year 6 children said 'it's different to all other lessons 'cos you are talking about more important things like different religions and personality' and 'we need to know how to respect other religions so we're not racist'.

Children demonstrate good subject knowledge about a range different world faiths although their knowledge of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, is less well developed. RE makes a positive contribution to learners' spiritual moral, social and cultural development [SMSC] and to the Christian ethos of the school.

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

Collective worship contributes well to children's moral, cultural and social development and is valued by all members of the school community. Year 6 children contribute to collective worship by carrying out a range of jobs such as working the audio visual systems, choosing songs and music and sometimes providing instrumental accompaniment such as playing the piano when children enter the hall.

Children and adults recognise the role of worship in learning about Bible stories and supporting the development of positive moral and social attitudes. Children say that the stories used in worship help them know how to behave although they are only able to loosely describe the stories. The life and teachings of Jesus and an understanding of God as Father Son and Holy Ghost is much less well focussed in planning than individual Bible stories. As a result, although able to make some links between the stories and general school values children do not yet understand the values as distinctive Christian values, nor do they understand the important place of Jesus in worship

Learners use prayer in a range of formal and informal context and recognise a place for prayer in their daily lives in school and at home. They write sensitive prayers to share in worship and to say before lunch and home times. Some children talk about saying personal prayers at home for example a Year 6 child said 'I do it before meals and going to bed' and a Year 3 girl agreed also saying 'yes, and at weekends' and also that prayer can take a variety of styles for example a Year 5 said 'singing songs are sort of prayers in a different form'. However, generally children do not yet have a good understanding of the special place of prayer for Christians in developing a personal or spiritual relationship with God.

Opportunities for individual reflection during worship are supported by reflective areas in classrooms and around the school including, for example, a place to write thoughts about worship and answer philosophical questions such as 'what do you think the future will be like?' However, there are fewer opportunities for extended and shared reflection such as through formal or informal discussion. As a result, children find it difficult to describe how

reflection contributes to their spiritual development and are yet to understand individual spiritual development to the same degree as their joint moral and social development.

All teachers and a range of visitors contribute to leading collective worship including the local vicar, Methodist minister and, very recently a team from Open the Book. Overall planning remains with a few adults and does not yet involve children. The main themes of Anglican Church festivals, traditions and seasons create a consistent framework for example Harvest, Christmas and Lent forming year on year consistency to planning along with themes around positive behaviour and moral attitudes. Visits to the church for key festivals are enjoyed by all members of the school community and have become a much anticipated opportunity to be together. Parents say that attendance at events in the local church has increased significantly over the years and that now 'it is hard to get a seat, you have to be early'.

Although termly planning provides an outline for themes for worship detail related to Anglican practice or Christian symbols is not evident. Specific Anglican practices are rarely demonstrated in school and opportunities for associating Christian belief with particular symbols, for example using a candle to signify Jesus as light of the world, are not taken.

The development of monitoring and evaluation for the impact of collective worship has lacked pace since the last inspection. Governors attend worship and give feedback about their visit to the governing body and children are asked to write responses to worship. Although monitoring has informed the arrangements for worship it does not inform an evaluation of the impact of worship in the life of the school.

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

Leaders consistently support and promote an ethos based on the school's intrinsic Christian values which permeates all aspects of school life. The full curriculum, including its strategies and methods for delivery, is informed by the Christian values of the school which impacts directly on relationships, behaviour, standards, children's engagement and staff professional development. Leaders ensure the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met.

Careful consideration is given to succession planning alongside providing opportunities for professional development. The future leader for RE is being given time to shadow the current leader and attend training with him. New initiatives, for example transferring marking and feedback strategies from English to RE, are given time for trial and reshaping before becoming policy across the school. Both these approaches enable successful, steady improvement whilst sustaining the school's vision of serving its community 'within the context of Christian beliefs and practices'.

Leaders have identified that they need to explicitly articulate the distinctiveness of the Christian values to the school community. They also plan to be more overt in making explicit the association between the teachings and life of Jesus Christ to their strategic decisions for school development and ethos.

Improvement plans are carefully thought through and written collaboratively. Staff feel they have an important role to play in school development and as a result a cohesive approach has ensured good performance is consolidated and steady improvements are made. Self-evaluation is less rigorous and involves fewer people. Specific training in monitoring and evaluation of the distinctive Christian character of the school has been limited. The ethos committee is described by governors as 'in its infancy'. As a result, improvements in this area have been slower than could be expected. Governor minutes do, however, demonstrate that the school's distinctive values inform leadership decisions across a wide range of areas for example when considering acquiring funding for a development project governors posed the question 'would receiving lottery funding go against school values?'

There is strong contribution to, and support of, the school and its ethos by parents, local churches, the community and the diocese. Articles from governors and others at the school are published in the parish magazine and parents say the relationships between the school and both the vicar and local Methodist minister are well known and valued as a characteristic of village life. These positive relationships result in providing a secure community for the families and benefitting learners' confidence and resilience.

SIAMS report November 2016 Leven Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Leven, Beverley HU17 5NX