

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Pollington-Balne CE School

Balne Moor Road, Goole, DN14 0DZ

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese / Methodist District [delete as appropriate]

Sheffield

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority / Date of academy conversion [delete as appropriate]

East Riding

Date/s of inspection

24 November 2016

Date of last inspection

6 October 2011

Type of school and unique reference number

CE Voluntary Aided Primary

Headteacher

Hayley McNeill

Inspector's name and number

David Shannon 617

School context

Pollington-Balne is a rural school serving the surrounding villages. The number on role is 102. The school has a smaller than average proportion of pupils disadvantaged by educational or health issues. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Following an outstanding Ofsted report the school has reorganised on the basis of six classes. The current headteacher has led the school since just before the last SIAMS inspection in 2011. The local incumbent is actively involved in the school, is vice-chair of governors, and her church is attended by the whole school for Christian festivals and special occasions. Her church is adjacent to the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Pollington-Balne as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian ethos, based on the teaching of Jesus, has an impact on every aspect of school life, so that each child feels valued and loved
- The collective worship themes are well organised and support the Religious Education (RE) programme of the school, so that children develop their spiritual learning as they move through the school
- The leadership of the school is exceptional at classroom, leadership team and governor level, successfully sharing a vision for the school's development with its whole community

Areas to improve

- Develop the role of the Worship Council to assist in the development of school and church based worship which is both planned and owned by the pupils
- Further the links with the parish church, so that pupil, their parents and friends, develop their spiritual lives in a partnership of school and church working closely together

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

This school reflects the importance of its Christian distinctiveness in all aspects of everyday life, so that its atmosphere is vibrant and stimulating. Improvement in standards has been rapid under the present head, since each child is encouraged to reach their full potential as a child of God. The school's vision is imparted for pupils through distinctly Christian values, which provide a clear focus for all work and play. Perseverance and responsibility are promoted to ensure hard work and high attendance are achieved by all, and hence behaviour is exemplary and

exclusions extremely rare. Trust, forgiveness and peace characterise relationships between all adults and pupils on the site, so that pupils offer their talents readily in the service of others and feel totally safe on site. The curriculum has a clear impact in promoting inquisitiveness and a thirst for knowledge, and pupils listen carefully to the views of others, while using their God-given intelligence to think out things for themselves. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the curriculum are integrated seamlessly in the whole learning programme and this is well supported by the RE teaching. For example, pupils are doing number work and creative writing about endangered species in Nepal, while learning about Buddhism and its impact on global attitudes. The school's reward system is based on Christian values, and is a powerful factor in ensuring team-work is successful in learning activities and in ensuring the school stretches itself to achieve sporting success against bigger schools. Children access all activities with enthusiasm, whether a whole school outing to learn at a Buddhist sanctuary in Halifax, or when raising money for Children in Need, seeing accepting diversity as part of their Christian responsibility. Their learning makes them aware of global concerns, and prompts them to question events occurring in the name of religion in Syria and in Iraq. Pupils readily forgive and make up after squabbles, so that disputes are rare and bullying of any kind unheard of. The school council representatives, in distinct red school sweatshirts, can explain where issues raised in collective worship have promoted higher standards of caring around the school, particularly in accepting pupils facing disability challenges.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The spiritual development of children is not bolted-on, but integral to every activity in school. Stories covered in worship give strong imperatives to good conduct, such as David's determination to stand up to Goliath, so that pupils are used to succeeding against all odds. Worship gives pupils a sense of the different branches of the church, and regular visitors ensure they meet Christians from a wide range of backgrounds. A Worship Council, separate from the school council, systematically is reviewing and developing worship activities both in school and in the parish church, so that pupils can develop further their sense of owning worship. The approachability of the parish incumbent has been a major factor in developing awe and wonder in worship, and all pupils expressed excitement when worship involved visiting her church. Pupils readily recognise the significance of different locations and symbols within the church, and identify the font, lectern and communion rail, explaining their sacramental significance. Pupils' enthusiasm impacts on the numbers of parents and friends attending acts of worship held in church at festival times. Pupils have considered in depth the Christmas and Easter stories, so that their significance to faith is well understood. Less recognised was Harvest as a festival of God the creator, or Pentecost, although they were completing work on the Trinity at the time of inspection. They could describe the lives of the four patron saints, and understood both their significance and that of the monarch as head of the Anglican church. There is a clear plan for collective worship, with a school value the over-arching theme for each half term. Worship is creative, inclusive and accessible to all pupils, with a great enthusiasm for participation both individually and collectively. The worship programme nurtures spirituality and encourages pupils to ask deep questions either directly, or indirectly through the "ask Eleanor" box. Children understand the nature and purpose of prayer, have devised their own grace and sing it enthusiastically as they sit down to eat together. Prayer corners in classes, and a prayer tree for remembrance in the school entrance, offer children a variety of opportunities to offer prayer throughout the school day. The reliance on prayer has enabled this school to accept change and to embrace it, overcoming losses of key staff through illness and bereavement. Children know well their Bible stories, making clear distinctions between parable, miracle and teaching, so that they can describe their own response to worship with clarity and individuality.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Delivery of RE is cross-curricular, promoting some stimulating and reflective writing in workbooks. It is delivered by all staff, conscientiously and with integrity. The headteacher has recently taken responsibility for the subject, and has brought to it both clarity and vision, particularly through effective systematic evaluation of learning activities. Study themes promote understanding of the breadth and richness of Christian communities; children also accept the contribution made to debates of faith by Buddhism, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. Time is allowed in lessons for reflection and pupils' individual responses; this subject is well resourced and constantly evolving. A new assessment system is in place, reflecting the new diocesan agreed syllabus, and this is carefully explained both to pupils and their parents. One result is that both home and school develop a learning partnership, and sensitive green pen marking system communicates current progress and future targets in workbooks. Therefore standards in RE are high, reflecting the school's enthusiasm for the subject. Some pupils, who had little experience of RE teaching in their previous school, had made rapid progress at Pollington-Balne. Pupils access the higher learning skills through having considerable control of their own learning, creating prioritising exercises to reflect their own wishes and feelings, or putting themselves in stories to promote both empathy and a creative imagination. Termly visits to places of worship ensure that pupils engage with a wide range of cultural and religious communities. Pupils talk as readily

about themes in RE as they do about their literacy or number work, and express their views with confidence, open to developing their beliefs through listening to others. The organisation and delivery of RE ensures that its strength permeates the whole school curriculum, enriching pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which in turn enhances relationships at all levels.

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

Since the last inspection, the staff have engaged with two training days to develop the school's ethos; this has led to a clear vision, led by the headteacher, but embraced by all. The outworking of this school's vision is changing its community for the better, involving former pupils and new parents in making the school the centre of village life. The leadership team is cohesive and mutually supportive in driving up standards and in moving the school forward. The deputy head leads a stimulating programme of sporting activities, in which all children both strive and thrive, but clearly linked to a sense of our bodies as fabulous and amazing gifts from God. The school is led by an exceptional headteacher, who has developed a clear Christian vision, in partnership with staff, which is preparing all staff for leadership roles in similar schools. Governance is a strength of the school, and governors discharge their responsibilities with clarity and flexibility. They are all engaged in monitoring and evaluating aspects of the school's curriculum, and intimately involved in planning at both subject and whole school level. The governors responsible for both RE and for collective worship had reviewed the school policies, and submitted clear developmental goals within the overall school development plan. The incumbent gives generously of her time both for pupils and the staff of the school, and hence reinforces the sense of service to the community, which is such a vital value of the school. Governors act as a bridge with the local community, both promoting and affirming the whole work of the school. Hence the roll is steadily rising, and pupils who join from other schools find the Christian distinctiveness both refreshing and empowering. Parents accept with enthusiasm invitations to school worship, both in school and in the parish church. The school development plan includes initiatives to make the parish church more accessible to parents, through more frequent events to mark the Christian year and strategic use of a newly appointed youth worker, working across two parishes. The points for action from the last SIAMS have been fully met, and have been used to move the school forward significantly as a church school. Clubs and activities promote the school's vision through workshops, Godly play and sporting events, so that this school is acting as a beacon of hope for its community. The requirements for statutory RE and collective worship are more than fully met by this expanding and exciting primary school, which shows a clear capacity for sustained improvement.

SIAMS report November 2016 Pollington-Balne CE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Goole, DN14 0DZ