

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wynyard Church of England Primary School

Wynyard Woods, Wynyard, Billingham, TS22 5SE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Durham
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Not previously inspected
Date of academy conversion	New free school - 1 September 2015
Name of single-academy trust	Wynyard Church of England Primary School
Dates of inspection	25 June 2018
Date of last inspection	Not previously inspected
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 142108
Headteacher	Roger Ward
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Canon Steven Harvey 891

School context

This free school opened in September 2015 and operates in temporary accommodation on a temporary site. The school roll has increased very significantly across all year groups since 2015, and there are currently 159 pupils from Reception to Year 5. Pupils enter the school from a range of settings. On entry, some pupils are better prepared than others for the next stage of learning. The school serves the Wynyard Estate, but also takes pupils from a wider area. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs is well below the national average. Almost all pupils are White British.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wynyard Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's core Christian values are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school and shape its approach to all aspects of its life and work.
- Collective worship is distinctively Christian and inclusive, and both reflects and strengthens the school's Christian character and values.
- The school attaches great importance to religious education (RE) and to the contribution it makes to the school's Christian character and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's senior leadership team and governing body are passionate about, and ambitious for, the school as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of different traditions of Christian worship, and of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, in order to enrich their appreciation of difference and diversity within the Christian faith.
- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so as to enrich, in an age appropriate way, their grasp of this central tenet of Christian belief.
- Develop opportunities for pupils to contribute to the planning and evaluating of collective worship, in order to extend their sense of ownership of this central part of the school's life.

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

The school's core Christian values of wisdom, love, forgiveness and faith are explicitly stated throughout the school and are deeply embedded in its life and work. As a rights-respecting school, with the Rights Respecting School Award, each of the core values is understood as expressing respect – for God, for others and for self. This respect is evident in the life of the whole community.

All members of the community understand that the school's values are rooted in biblical and other Christian teaching. When speaking about faith, for example, pupils give biblical examples of people of faith. They have an impressively mature understanding of faith, acknowledging that it is something which can be challenging. When speaking about love, they refer to the love of God shown in Christ, and say that 'God loves us, so we should love God and each other'. Pupils are very clear that the excellent behaviour and relationships which permeate the school are due to the school's Christian character and values. 'There is a lot of forgiveness here, and opportunities for a fresh start.' They report that there is no bullying in the school and that they feel very safe.

Pupils are equally clear about the significant impact which the school's Christian character and values have on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are very aware of the spiritual dimension of human life and respond expectantly and sensitively to the rich opportunities they have to explore and develop their spirituality – particularly, but not exclusively, in collective worship. They have a high degree of understanding of, and respect for, difference and diversity, not least in their own community, and particularly in relation to faiths other than Christianity. This understanding is facilitated by multi-cultural days, and also by visits from members of non-Christian faiths, including from among parents. Pupils are being very well prepared to take their place as responsible adult citizens in a multi-cultural and multi-faith world. While their knowledge and understanding of various Christian denominations is well developed, pupils' awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is less secure.

Very good levels of attendance reflect how the school's Christian character helps to create and sustain an environment which pupils wish to be part of. They know that they are loved, valued, supported and encouraged 'to be the best they can be under God's love'. Pupils, staff and parents make strong connections between the school's Christian character and pupils' academic progress and attainment. They speak of this character as encouraging pupils to have faith in themselves and to be aspirational. Progress and attainment scores are above the national average. For example, in 2017 almost all Year 2 pupils achieved age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics combined. Disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progress at a rate similar to that of their peers. This reflects the school's being an inclusive Christian community which welcomes, supports, develops and celebrates everyone.

Pupils are excited and challenged by RE. They value the significant contribution the subject makes to their understanding of the school's Christian character and values. They also value how their study of religious belief and practice enhances their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily act of collective worship is recognised by the whole school community as both reflecting and reinforcing the school's distinctive Christian character and core values. Its impact is clearly and confidently articulated. Pupils speak of worship as 'very important', as 'helping us to be better people', and as 'strengthening us as a community'. Parents refer to pupils talking very positively about worship at home and of their being particularly enthusiastic about the songs which relate to each of the school's core values.

Pupils' engagement with worship is of a very high order and reflects the inspirational nature of what they experience. They sing with enthusiasm, and engage with the opportunities for reflection, for responding to questions, for discussion and for prayer very thoughtfully. While pupils regularly and confidently contribute to worship, the opportunities for them to plan worship are not extensive. Worship inspires spiritual and moral reflection and challenge. Clear and strong links are made between biblical and other Christian teaching, the school's core values, and the school as a rights-respecting school. This leads to pupils having a deep concern for those less fortunate than themselves, and to such fund-raising ventures as financing, for a year, two members of staff in their link school in India.

Pupils understand the nature and purpose of prayer. They refer to prayer as 'speaking to God', and as being about 'thanking' as well as 'asking'. In addition to responding confidently and sensitively when invited to pray in worship, they make extensive use of the opportunities provided in classrooms, for example by a prayer tree or a cross, to write prayers which are subsequently prayed in class worship.

Worship is both distinctively Christian and inclusive. All pupils are included in the central messages of each act of worship. Biblical material is at the core of worship, and there is a strong focus on the person of Jesus. Pupils understand the central position of Jesus in the Christian faith. Their grasp of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is less secure. The Christian calendar features prominently in the themes chosen for worship. Anglican clergy make a significant contribution to the leadership of worship. The absence of visitors from other denominations restricts pupils' experience of other traditions of Christian worship.

Worship is planned very thoroughly and is well resourced. While pupils have some opportunities to evaluate their experience of worship – for example, through a collective worship diary – these opportunities are limited. The headteacher’s written evaluations of worship are very full and help colleagues to develop the effectiveness of their leadership of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The school attaches great importance to RE, and this is recognised and valued by pupils. ‘This is a church school, and we do deeper RE.’ Pupils speak very positively about their enjoyment of the subject and of the contribution it makes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The majority of curriculum time is given to Christianity. This ensures that pupils develop very good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, including of how the school’s core values are rooted in Christianity. Other major world faiths are also studied, and pupils are helped to explore links between different faiths and practices. For example, work on the Ten Commandments includes a comparison with the Five Pillars of Islam.

Expectations of teaching and learning are high, and pupils respond very well. Lesson observations reveal that the majority of teaching is outstanding and is never less than consistently good. Effective differentiation ensures that the learning needs of all pupils are met. Progress and attainment in RE are at least in line with that in other core subjects, and the overwhelming majority of pupils are working at or above the expected level.

Pupils are attentive and engaged in lessons. They listen well to each other and support and encourage each other in their learning. They take great pride in the presentation of their work. They respond very well to the range of teaching methods which they experience. For example, the introduction of Godly Play as a teaching resource has had a very positive effect on pupils’ development of higher level skills such as empathy, and on their personal reflections about questions of meaning and purpose.

Subject leadership is of a very high standard, reflecting both expertise and vision. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are given a high priority. They result in action plans which lead to improvement. For example, a new marking scheme has given greater attention to the use of challenging questions. This is having a significant effect on the development of pupils’ skills in such areas as enquiry, interpretation, evaluation and reflection.

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

The school’s senior leadership team and governing body are passionate about, and ambitious for, the school as a church school. This commitment and ambition have enabled the school to make a remarkable journey since it opened with only 16 pupils in 2015. They have skilfully and successfully negotiated the great challenges of opening and operating the school in temporary accommodation on a temporary site. Governors speak of these challenges as having ‘helped us to concentrate on what really matters’, and of the Christian faith as the ‘morning star’ which has motivated and guided all that has been done. Leaders articulate, live out and promote, from personal conviction, a vision for the school which is rooted in Christian belief and teaching. This vision inspires and guides all aspects of the school’s life and work. Leaders speak confidently and convincingly of the impact of this vision on the life of the whole community, and particularly on pupils’ behaviour, relationships, attitudes, personal development and academic progress and attainment. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is reflected in a staff team which is characterized by excellent relations and mutual support. Staff feel valued, encouraged and developed. Continuing professional development (CPD) is given a high priority and is strategically planned, with each member of staff having an individual CPD pathway. Leaders are committed to preparing staff for future leadership of church schools.

Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school’s performance. This is the result of highly effective methods of monitoring and evaluating and leads to strategies for improvement in both subject and whole-school development plans. Governors are very ‘hands-on’, and their formal and informal monitoring of the life and work of the school enables them to be very effective in giving both support and challenge.

The school has a wide range of mutually supportive and beneficial partnerships. The relationship which the local Anglican community has helped the school to be more explicit and confident about its Christian character. This is seen, for example, in the local incumbent’s role in the introduction of Godly Play. The benefit to the church has been to strengthen the local church community, not least by providing a venue for worship; it has ‘given us a new impetus and led to our being more enthusiastic about mission’. The school is benefitting the local community by providing a meeting place for various groups on the estate. Relationships with the diocese are very strong. Partnerships with a further education college in Durham and with a school in India greatly enrich pupils’ knowledge and understanding of local, national and global communities. Parents and carers speak of their partnership with the school as ‘excellent’ and of the whole school community as ‘a family’.

Leaders ensure that arrangements for collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. The priority which they give to collective worship and RE leads to high standards in both areas.