

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| Brockholes Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School | |
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| Brockholes Lane, Holmfirth, Huddersfield HD9 7EB | |
| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | Leeds |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Local authority | Kirklees |
| Date of inspection | 7 November 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 25 June 2013 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Controlled 107713 |
| Headteacher | Clare Thomas |
| Inspector's name and number | Lynne Gillions 662 |

School context

Brockholes is a one form entry school with 210 pupils on roll. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are no pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above national averages. The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is below national averages. Levels of mobility are higher than those nationally. Pupils come from the village and surrounding area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brockholes Church of England Junior and Infant School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school is led by an outstanding headteacher, ably supported by staff and governors, who ensures that the school's Christian values are explicit and embedded and permeate all areas of school life.
- This is a happy school where children behave well and enjoy learning enabling them to make good progress.
- Relationships in school are excellent and adults provide good role models for the children who in turn demonstrate respect and care for each other.
- The school has effective partnerships with local churches which make a positive contribution to the spiritual development of the children and which help to embed them into their local community.
- The school nurtures children well and provides effectively for the needs of vulnerable children, removing barriers to their learning and enabling them to succeed.
- Children have opportunities to take on roles which help them to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and others.

Areas to improve

- Increase children's capacity to talk about spiritual issues and express their own opinions with greater confidence and conviction.
- Develop reflection areas indoors and outdoors which are more interactive and encourage children to respond to ideas and themes and offer them creative opportunities for prayer and contemplation.
- Enhance children's understanding of other faiths by visiting different places of worship and inviting into school people of other faiths to share their beliefs and practices.

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

The school's core values are respect and kindness and these are reinforced by a wider range of Christian values such as forgiveness trust and wisdom. These values are deeply embedded and demonstrated in all areas of school life. This is a caring school where children are nurtured well and where they feel safe and happy. Consequently, they have very positive attitudes to learning which help them to progress well so that standards in most areas are rising and children are making good progress. All stakeholders recognise the contribution that Christian values make to this process.

The school monitors children's performance effectively and identifies where support is needed and who will benefit from extra help. Some children have access to intervention groups which take place before school so that they have an opportunity to learn in a small focus group before they go into the larger classroom situation.

Adults work as a team and they provide good role models for the children which means that children also work well together and support each other in their learning. Parents and children appreciate the kindness of school leaders and staff as they put the school's Christian values into practice. Parents commented on the confidence that school gives to their children enabling them to blossom. This was particularly appreciated by parents whose children had moved to the school from other settings.

Children have opportunities to take on responsibilities such as on the School Council or the Eco Committee. Year 5 volunteers are trained as Befrienders so that when they move into Year 6 they can help resolve conflicts and support children who may need a friend. They are taught to demonstrate integrity, compassion and confidentiality. Older children are also buddies to Reception children, helping them to settle into school routines such as lunchtimes. Such activities are helping the children develop life skills.

Behaviour in school is excellent and where issues arise they are dealt with effectively and positively. Children who have specific behavioural issues are supported well by the staff and are encouraged to meet the school's expectations of them.

Spirituality is an important element of school life. Children are offered a range of experiences within school or by other providers such as the Hand to Mouth team who deliver reflective days with the children. There are reflection areas in classrooms but these could be developed more creatively so that children can offer their own responses to themes and ideas and pose their own questions. The school benefits from an attractive location so the outdoors could be utilised to provide a quiet, reflective space.

The school and local Methodist church together have been involved with a project involving singing which gave children the opportunity to work alongside church members, some of whom were elderly. Children can also attend a club at the Anglican church where they do a range of activities on a spiritual theme. The partnerships with the churches help to firmly root children into their local community and widen their understanding of different expressions of Christianity. There is also a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, day visits and residential which help to broaden children's experience.

Children understand the importance of learning about other faiths and communities and show a respect for diversity. One year group benefitted from a link with a school with children from different communities. It would be helpful to give children more experience of other faiths through visitors and visits to different places of worship in order to increase their understanding of the similarities and differences between different faiths.

The Christian character of the school and the wide range of experiences on offer make a strong contribution to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important and valued part of school life and all stakeholders appreciate the part it plays in communicating Christian values to the children. They enjoy worship times and parents say that they often talk about them and sing some of the songs at home. They can relate some of what they hear to their own lives. They gave some examples, one child saying when she heard about forgiveness she knew she had to forgive her friend. Another child recognised that the story of Daniel in the Lions' Den taught him the importance of persevering when you know you are doing the right thing. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities to discuss links between the school's Christian values, biblical teaching and their own lives in order to develop their capacity to form their own views and express them coherently.

Children show some understanding of the Christian view of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They described the Father as the creator, Jesus as the Son who was sacrificed and the Holy Spirit as making his home within us.

During collective worship, children behave respectfully as was exemplified during an act of worship focusing on remembrance. During the reflection time, they were quiet and thoughtful whilst, in silence, some children took poppies to the front to create a wreath.

Collective worship planning is undertaken by a worship group which comprises adults and children. As such, children take an active part in planning and evaluating their worship times. They do lead some aspects of worship but there is scope to widen opportunities for pupils to take on more responsibility. Leaders mainly come from the teaching staff and the local churches. There is an ongoing relationship with the Anglican church and the school now also has a strong partnership with the Methodist church. The minister regularly brings in a group to lead Open the Book assemblies. These are popular with the children and they enjoy being asked to take part in them. Special services are held in the parish church to celebrate the main Christian festivals.

Children understand some Anglican practices such as the use of liturgical colours to delineate the seasons of the church year. They also show some understanding of the symbols of bread and wine used during holy communion services.

In response to some of the themes used in collective worship, children engage in a range of fund raising activities to support a wide range of charities. The School Council take responsibility for some of these events.

Prayers are used during the school day and pupils can write and read their own prayers. They are on display in reflection areas in all the classrooms. Opportunities for spontaneous prayer could be developed as well as exploring some creative ways of praying such as developing a prayer walk outdoors. This would help to widen children's experience of prayer. Children understand that prayer is important to people of faith.

Collective worship is monitored regularly by pupils and staff. Governors also visit collective worship and report back to the governing body.

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

School benefits from an outstanding headteacher who has the full support of the school community. Her Christian vision is shared by staff and governors. This results in a coherent message which is lived out and communicated effectively to children and their parents. 'They don't just talk the talk, they walk the walk.'

Leaders and governors understand the impact that the school's Christian ethos has on standards of attainment. Kindness is demonstrated as children help each other in their learning and this helps pupils to progress. Children consistently talk of the kindness of staff in supporting their learning and looking after their welfare.

Leaders ensure that, wherever appropriate, resources are allocated to support vulnerable pupils, those with specific learning or behavioural issues and those pupils who move to the school from other settings. Support staff are deployed well to effectively meet the needs of such pupils. In this way, the school demonstrates Christian care in practice.

Leaders also ensure staff receive appropriate support for their professional development, such as the training undertaken by the RE co-ordinator to equip her to lead the introduction of new initiatives. Staff also spoke of the support given to them from leaders and colleagues if they were facing personal difficulties or challenges. They feel this reflects the caring ethos of the school.

Monitoring and evaluating activities are in place and lead to improvement. It would be beneficial if governors' activities were more formalised to ensure that areas affecting the school's effectiveness as a church school are firmly embedded. They seek the views of stakeholders through annual questionnaires and discussions and this helps them to know the school well. As a result, they execute their roles effectively providing a good balance of support and challenge to the school.

The school has excellent relationships with parents. Leaders and staff work hard to involve them in their children's learning. They provide parent workshops and opportunities to work alongside their children. Parents really appreciate the open-door policy which means they can approach school with any issues or problems and know they will be addressed.

The partnership with the local church has been in place for many years and school now also benefits from a strong relationship with the Methodist church who support the school in many ways. As such, children become involved in a range of village events which help to embed them into their community. The school is also involved in diocesan activities and training ensuring that staff and governors are able to fulfil their roles effectively.

Overall, the excellent leadership at all levels ensures that the needs of children at Brockholes are provided for well, in a school which is both effective and distinctive in its outliving of Christian values.