

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Lepton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior Infant and Nursery School

Station Road Lepton Huddersfield HD8 0DE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Leeds
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Kirklees
Date of inspection	9 February 2018
Date of last inspection	25 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 107716
Headteacher	Thomas Burns
Inspector's name and number	Lorraine Hanson 769

School context

Lepton is an average sized primary school with 211 pupils on roll, plus 26 part-time nursery places. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium, who are disabled or who have special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is also below average. The headteacher took up his appointment in 2014, which was since the last inspection. The school was in Ofsted special measures at the last SIAMS inspection. The school was last inspected under the Ofsted framework in 2015 and achieved a grade of good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lepton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior Infant and Nursery School as a Church of England school are good

- The inspirational vision and leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the committed staff team, governors and clergy promotes a shared Christian vision which permeates all areas of school life.
- The school's Christian values impact extremely positively on pupils, enabling them to thrive in their personal development, behaviour and attitudes, which are outstanding.
- Positive and supportive relationships at all levels in the school nurture commitment and inspire pupils to take responsibility for others.
- Pupils' achievement has improved over recent years and achievement for pupils in early years, key stages 1 and key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are around national averages.

Areas to improve

- Deepen pupils' personal spirituality by providing high quality experiences which promote individual reflection and prayer.
- Extend pupils' concept of the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit particularly through collective worship and religious education.

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

Christian values are made explicit and embedded in the daily life of the school. They underpin the Christian ethos and include thankfulness, creation, hope, compassion, trust, endurance, service and koinonia. Each class explores two Christian values in more depth each year. As a consequence, pupils develop a deep understanding of how the values relate to the teachings of Jesus and how they may translate these into actions in their own lives. A child commented, 'Koinonia is a Christian value that means community, our school is a community and we care about each other and help each other out'. Year 3 and year 4's response to the value of endurance displays a decorated paper hand from each pupil, with a cross made of hands in the centre. The caption reads, 'Many hands supporting each other through times of endurance'. Pupils show they relate to a wide range of Christian values and are able to apply these to the way they behave. For example, all classes are involved in community projects, which are explicitly linked to their class' Christian values. Pupils live out the value of service through working to enhance the village square or singing to residents at a local care home. Members of the school community talk confidently about the distinctive nature of the school and how it impacts positively on the lives of all who work and learn there. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well through the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, acts of worship and religious education (RE). Pupils are provided with opportunities to explore the big questions through Philosophy for Children (P4C), which contributes to their spiritual development and addresses a development point from the last inspection. For example, key stage 2 pupils discussed why the universe exists through reference to the Bible and to science. Pupils were engaged, enquiring and reflective. They confidently expressed their opinions and listened to each other with respect. The school's distinctively Christian values impact positively on pupils' academic achievement and enable them to thrive in their personal development, behaviour and attitudes which exemplary. Pupils are respectful of diversity and difference both within the Anglican church and other faith communities. This is developed through visitors to school and visits to church and other places of worship, for example a mosque. Visitors to school have included a Sikh man talking about his culture and faith, representatives of the Mara Anglican Diocese talking about Christianity in Tanzania and African dancers leading workshops for pupils. The school's celebration of black history also contributes to pupil's respect of cultural and religious differences. This leads to all pupils feeling confident to talk about their own religion, or none, Christian or Sikh. The school's Christian ethos provides an environment within which pupils are nurtured and enabled to achieve. Staff give their time generously to provide an opportunity for pupils to come into class before the start of the school each day, to receive support for their learning, which most pupils take up. This demonstrates pupils' positive attitudes to learning, which has led to improvements in pupils' progress and attainment over recent years. Achievement is now at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. More pupils attained the higher standards, than average in these core subjects by the end of key stage 2 in 2017, although middle attaining pupils progressed less well than other groups. The school development plan shows clear strategies to address this issue. Disadvantaged pupils generally achieve as well as other pupils in school. The introduction of the Understanding Christianity in RE contributes positively to the school's Christian character. RE teaching is good. RE and the Christian character of the school contribute positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a key stage 1 lesson pupils were able to reflect on the love of their parents have for them and link this to the love God has for us all. Pupils were engaged, they discussed and worked together co-operatively. Pupils say they enjoy RE and it makes them think. Pupils grow into responsible young people through for example, older pupils working with younger pupils as reading buddies. This adds to the sense of belonging in the school community, which parents say they appreciate. Strong, supportive relationships, founded on Christian principles, are apparent between all members of the school community. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, they feel safe and attendance is above average. There is an outside reflective area which pupils say they enjoy and they like to look at the calm pictures, think to themselves or pray if they want to. However, there are no similar spaces inside which prompt an individual response to reflection and prayer. This section is not yet outstanding because opportunities for pupils to engage in experiences to develop personal spirituality are not clearly identified, so less well developed than it could be. Also, although progress is broadly average by the end of key stage 2, middle attaining pupils progressed less well in the core subjects than other groups.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is valued across the school community and is central to each school day. It impacts positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and to the Christian character of the school. The collective worship overview is well planned by the headteacher and the previous vicar. A range of people plan and lead worship in school including the headteacher, teachers, clergy, church members and the pupils themselves. There is a pupil led worship every half term. The whole school gather calmly and thoughtfully for worship. The worship table is set with a candle and cross, together with the words of the opening prayer and the Lord's prayer. Year 4 pupils had made a significant contribution to planning their class worship for the whole school. All class members were involved in leading the worship independently. The focus was on the subject of the Christian value of endurance. Year 4 pupils sang with passion, 'You Raise Me Up to More Than I can be', which was felt emotionally by

those present and exemplified endurance as a Christian value. This was reinforced by a short reading from the Bible from Romans 15 v.5 and prayers offered, which had been written by pupils. The worship song 'Shine Jesus Shine', was well chosen to support the theme and was sung with enthusiasm and actions by the whole school. Pupils regularly contribute creatively to worship, particularly through music and drama, which addresses a development point from the last inspection. They know and enjoy singing a wide range of worship songs and say they think about what the words mean. They are prompted by collective worship leaders to reflect on the theme and what it teaches them. School services are held in St John's church at Easter, Christmas and for a leavers' service in the summer. Pupils talk about how Bible stories relate to the school's Christian values and how they affect the decisions they make, as well as their behaviour towards each other. For example, a pupil remarked, 'Jesus was a friend to a friendless man (Zacchaeus) and when someone is sat alone on the bench I will go and ask them to play'. Pupils understand the central position Jesus has in the Christian faith. Reference is regularly made to the Holy Trinity as a candle is lit at the opening of collective worship, followed by a prayer regarding the light of God being all around us and within. Collective worship is not yet outstanding as the significance of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not generally made explicit to pupils and so their understanding of this is not yet as developed as it could be. Also, pupils do not experience representatives from different Christian traditions leading worship at present. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is carried out regularly and systematically by school leaders and governors. Pupils make comments through the school council. As a result of their suggestions the outside reflective areas was developed and pupils' writing and pictures included as inspiration. Prayers are offered before lunch and sometimes children have opportunity to write prayers in a lesson. Some pupils bring prayers into school they have written at home and these are added to the class prayer book and accessible for others to read. Prayers written by pupils are regularly offered during collective worship. However, pupils do not generally have access, inside school, to a place where spontaneous individual reflection or prayer is promoted during the school day.

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

The inspirational vision and leadership of the headteacher, supported by the highly committed staff team, governors and clergy promotes a shared Christian vision which permeates all areas of school life. All stakeholders were involved in an extensive review of the school mission and Christian values, which are now woven into policies, the curriculum and the work of the school, addressing a development point from the last inspection. Members of the school community comment on the distinctive character of the school and how this impacts positively on pupils' personal development and academic achievement. Within an ethos of Christian inclusiveness, the leadership and management are very effectively moving the school forward, overcoming many challenges since the last inspection. This has included leading the school out of special measures and into an Ofsted grade of good by December 2015. Against this background, the school's established strengths, highlighted in the previous inspection, are being sustained and the areas for development fully addressed. School leaders and governors have abundant capacity to continue to drive the school forward as a church school. Governors take an active role in school, they support and challenge the headteacher and have a realistic view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school provides staff and governors with continuous professional development opportunities that deepen their understanding of their role, the distinctive aspects of a church school and the RE curriculum. Monitoring and evaluation of church school aspects is thorough and regular. An annual plan prepared by school leaders and governors is in place, which maps out governors' monitoring visits to the school environment, collective worship and RE lessons. Governors' written reports regarding their visits are thorough, they are shared with school leaders and the governing body and fed into the school development plan as appropriate, to achieve further improvement. School leaders and staff are strongly committed to ensuring that pupils feel secure and valued in all aspects of school life. The new priest in charge at St John's Church took up her appointment in December 2017, following a year-long interregnum. Church members have played a valuable role in keeping the links with St John's Church strong during the absence of clergy, including regularly leading collective worship for the whole school. The priest in charge has already shown her commitment to maintaining the strong links between the church and school. She has led school worship and brought a Posada nativity into reception class. Some families took up the opportunity of borrowing the Posada to carry out the activities at home. The school choir sang at a Sunday Christingle service before Christmas. Year 5 pupils attended a church craft group to serve refreshments and have arranged to return to learn to knit. There are strong links with the community beyond the church. Pupils have worked with the parish council to bring about improvements and are involved in practical projects linked to the Christian values to improve the local area, which enables pupils to flourish as responsible young citizens. RE and collective worship meet statutory requirement. Parents are very appreciative of school leaders and the noticeable teamwork of staff. One parent remarked, 'You can trust staff to deal with things promptly'. Another commented, 'Teachers have genuine enthusiasm for the children and want the best for them'.