

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Knayton Church of England Primary School

Stockton Road Knayton Thirsk North Yorkshire YO7 4AN

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| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | York |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | North Yorkshire |
| Name of multi-academy trust / federation | N/A |
| Date/s of inspection | 9 February 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 21 May 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Primary VC 121506 |
| Headteacher | Nikkie Beniams |
| Inspector's name and number | Lucy Jordan |

School context

Knayton CE Primary school is smaller than average but has grown considerably in recent years. The headteacher was appointed in autumn 2014 and since then, almost all teaching staff have changed. Over half the pupils live outside the village. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom the school receives pupil premium funding are both lower than average. Governors are in the final stages of consultation over plans for the school to form part of a multi-academy trust comprising both church and community schools. The school belongs to a local teaching school alliance and the headteacher sits on the board of this.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Knayton CE VC Primary School of as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's distinctive Christian character is present in all areas of school life and the highest priority placed on nurturing pupils as 'children of God' so that they feel safe and happy, each capable of success.
- Sincere and effective relationships at all levels help make Knayton a place where personal development and academic achievement can thrive.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their involvement in planning and leading collective worship and can clearly articulate the relevance of Biblical stories to their own and others' lives.
- Leaders are passionate about ensuring the school's Christian distinctiveness continues to flourish in the future and are proactive in securing this.

Areas to improve

- Ensure the school's distinctive Christian values are evident in all documentation and on the website so that these are consistently and explicitly articulated at all levels.
- Extend pupils' skills of reflection so that further improvements to collective worship are based on a precise understanding of the influence of worship on the whole school community.
- Continue to develop the leadership skills of adults and pupils at Knayton, and in work with other schools, to ensure that Knayton's own distinctively Christian character is maintained, whilst also benefitting other schools in the future.

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

Everyone feels welcome at Knayton and the whole school community is proud to celebrate its distinctive Christian character which is deeply embedded in all areas of school life. Every child is seen as 'made in the image of God' and support for pupils who have experienced significant change in their lives is especially strong. This is because the staff recognise the individual requirements for these pupils and have received specialist training to support them in such a way that they can integrate happily and develop as individuals. Whilst the Christian values pertinent to Knayton are celebrated within the school, the website and documentation available on this does not consistently and explicitly articulate these, leading to them having a reduced profile in the public domain.

Thoughtfully planned religious education (RE) lessons engage pupils in comparing challenging current issues such as the refugee crisis in Syria with Mary and Joseph's escape to Egypt. As a result, pupils have developed an impressive understanding of the plight of those uprooted from their communities and a great respect for them as they embark on often perilous, journeys. RE also provides significant opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development for example by pupils learning about the work of Christian and Islamic charities. RE lessons play a major role in determining the Christian character of the school. This is evident in discussions about charitable work which pupils recognise as far more than just putting money in a box. Learners' awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is strong because they are encouraged to discuss world events which teachers display on the class Information Station.

Staff throughout the school are unequivocal in their commitment to ensuring pupils feel safe and happy. There is a strong sense of a close community within the school, united by shared Christian values of friendship, kindness and respect. This is of particular relevance given that the majority of pupils attending the school live outside the village. Core Christian values are clearly referenced to Biblical quotations, displayed round the school. Parents talk about the school as being 'like a family'. They also say that 'older children mix very well with younger children'. The outstanding behaviour of pupils and relationships at all levels reflect the school's commitment to living out their core Christian values. An example of this is in the school's transition process in which all new starters are assigned a 'buddy' before they begin at Knayton who then supports them to settle into the school community. All groups of pupils flourish at Knayton and academic achievement is high. Staff and governors have developed a shared definition of spirituality and created opportunities for this to be put into practice. The spiritual garden, recently redeveloped following building work is surrounded by new trees planted after older ones had to be removed, giving pupils a visual and spiritual sense of renewal. Spiritual Leaders work with the school's Christian distinctiveness leader to ensure that the garden and reflection areas within school provide an appropriate place for pupils to reflect and these are used and appreciated.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is highly valued by all groups in the community, especially when pupils plan and lead it themselves. For this reason, the recent Christingle service was particularly inspiring. Pupils explained, 'We got to pick what we could do. It made us feel special.' Pupils are proud to be Spiritual Leaders, a much sought-after position in the school, and enjoy working closely with the collective worship leader to weave the school's core Christian values into relevant themes. Staff and governors enjoy leading worship and visitors such as representatives of Christian Aid enrich it further.

Information about the impact of worship, collected from all groups within the school community, points to this being significant but it is not always used strategically. Pupils' enthusiasm at evaluating the impact of worship is evident but their skills of reflection are not strong enough to enable areas for improvement to be precisely identified as a result.

Pupils are able to connect with the worship themes and see the relevance to their own lives. They recognise the value of worship. Worship is inclusive and all staff attend. Even though the youngest pupils do not worship with the rest of the school until the summer term, the same themes are shared in age appropriate ways and there is engagement from all learners and adults. Staff value the time to pray and reflect and talk of collective worship as being 'a moment to centre'.

The impact of changing of name from 'assembly' to 'worship' has been particularly significant in helping the school community recognise the centrality of Jesus Christ to the Christian faith. Pupils make links with current themes of generosity and Biblical material such as the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The impact of worship often extends

beyond the act itself and this can be discerned in pupils' deeply caring responses to the refugee crisis. Beyond school, the aspirations raised by worship have contributed to learners' developing high levels of social responsibility through their charitable work for the homeless.

Children recognise the value of personal prayer which they feel 'makes you feel listened to' and regularly use the prayer and reflection areas around the school which provide a safe, calm and inspiring place for spiritual reflection. Pupils enjoy writing prayers and join in with prayer respectfully during collective worship. Pupils have a strong understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God as a result of explicit teaching. They learn distinctive features for Anglican practice, for example through their collective response to the greeting, 'The Lord be with you' and can clearly identify the major Christian festivals.

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

The consistent articulation by leaders, of the school's core Christian values and their relevance to life at Knayton impacts positively on all groups within the school. Areas from the previous inspection have been addressed. In particular, the greater involvement of pupils in planning and delivering worship has led to collective worship having a much greater impact on the whole school community. Through their actions, leaders live out the vision and this leads to excellent outcomes for pupils, both academic achievement and their personal development. By the time pupils leave Knayton their attainment is securely above national and they have made progress that is at least as good as that expected nationally. Leaders' strongly held conviction that pupils need to feel 'safe and happy' and nourished by a distinctively Christian ethos in order to learn best, is played out in every aspect of school life informing the whole curriculum.

Governors and senior leaders have seized the opportunity provided by the large numbers of new staff joining the school to reinforce the school's Christian vision so that everyone has a clear understanding of this. Through their decisive actions, there is a more cohesive and Christian approach to supporting the development of behaviour and attitudes right across the school with the result that both behaviour and attitudes are outstanding. Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides excellent opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through the participation of all pupils in the Forest School initiative, for example.

Planning at a strategic level is informed by the school's Christian vision, for example, revising the staffing structure to include a learning mentor to support the most vulnerable pupils. Pupils are seen as 'made in the image of God' and deliberately high staff: pupil ratios ensure all pupils receive the particular attention they need to achieve. Strong and effective partnerships between the school, parents, church and wider community are flourishing. In particular, the foundation governors have made an immense contribution during the vicar's absence, ensuring that the Christian character of the school has continued to grow. Parents value their involvement in the school as part of the Open the Book team and see the impact of the school's Christian vision reflected in the 'kindness' shown by children to one another. Outreach work and involvement within the North Star Teaching Alliance, along with an effective partnership with the diocese, forms part of the strategic plan, enabling leaders to ensure that what is most precious about Knayton's distinctively Christian character can be both retained and shared now and in the future, to the mutual benefit of all.

RE and collective worship leadership is particularly strong because high priority is placed on these areas. Training for and by leaders makes a very positive contribution and leads to practice which is highly effective, meets statutory requirements and continues to improve at a rapid pace.

SIAMS report February 2017 Knayton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Knayton YO7 4AN