

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Rockcliffe Church of England School

Rockcliffe, Carlisle, Cumbria CA6 4AA	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Carlisle
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority / Date of academy conversion [delete as appropriate]	Cumbria
Date of inspection	5 March 2018
Date of last inspection	19 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 112258
Headteacher	David Hodgkiss
Inspector's name and number	Carol Berry 324

School context

Rockcliffe is a smaller than average primary school of 135 pupils. The pupils are from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. There are fewer than usual disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (13%). Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. There are a small number of pupils from the traveller community. The number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (10%) is below the national average. The headteacher has been in post since 2008. There has been a significant turn-over of staffing in recent years, including changes in senior leadership.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rockcliffe as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Christian values are evident in supportive relationships and the care demonstrated by staff for each valued individual.
- There are very positive relationships with local clergy which enrich the worship life of the school and provide valued pastoral support. Collective worship is much enjoyed by pupils.
- Christian values are evident in practice. However, pupils have only a limited understanding of these values as distinctively Christian. Biblical teaching about Christian values is not often explored in depth in collective worship or through the curriculum.
- Pupils' involvement in leading and evaluating worship is developing. However, there has not been effective evaluation of pupils' understanding of Christian values or the impact of religious education (RE). Self-evaluation does not always feed into development planning.

Areas to improve

- Incorporate planning and evaluation of the school's Christian vision, including collective worship and RE, into the school's annual review cycle. This is so that accurate evaluation, involving all stakeholders, effectively informs the development of the school as a church school.
- Work in partnership with the diocese to access training in order to support the effective development of the school as a church school.
- Review planning for collective worship so that effective planning results in detailed consideration of themes over time. This is to help children develop their understanding of Christian values, beliefs and festivals.
- Support children in exploring prayer through a range of activities. This is to develop their understanding of the purpose of prayer and different types of prayer.

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

The school is a happy and secure place to learn. This is because staff are committed to caring for each valued individual. The headteacher and staff model caring relationships, founded on kindness and generosity. Older children enjoy caring for younger ones. A Key Stage 2 girl said, 'Everyone is kind and looks after us if we are upset.' Relationships between children and adults are very good. Governors, clergy and staff relate the school's caring ethos to its Christian vision. They aim to help pupils believe in themselves and give them confidence in a loving Christian family environment.

Teachers go out of their way to meet the needs of all pupils. Key Stage 1 pupils achieve well, although progress at Key Stage 2 varies. Parents of children with special educational needs comment on the exceptional care provided by the school. Parents of children who have recently moved to the school are delighted with the way they have flourished here. Children respect those who are different to themselves. A pupil who is a member of the traveller community spoke warmly about how she had been welcomed back when she returned to school after a time away. However, although values are modelled by staff and evident in relationships, children do not understand these values as explicitly Christian. Children have not developed the language needed to discuss Christian values. They have a very limited ability to make links between values, such as forgiveness, and Biblical teaching. They do not readily link their support for charities to either Christian values or the teaching of Jesus. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to talk about kindness, because this value has been a focus for their class this half term. However, this initiative to promote understanding of Christian values has not been implemented in other classes. There is little planning for teaching about Christian values through the curriculum. Opportunities for spiritual development are sometimes grasped as they arise during lessons, but spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is rarely secured by inclusion in planning.

Children enjoy RE and it contributes well to their understanding of Christian beliefs and festivals. Displays around the school show the way in which Christian festivals and stories have been used to challenge children's thinking. In a Key Stage 1 lesson pupils found out about the meaning of Easter through written tasks, discussion and craft work. Pupils in Key Stage 2 explored different Easter symbols as they tasted hot cross buns and simnel cake. However, children's understanding of other faiths is poor and lacks coherence. Learning about other faiths mainly comprises teaching about a few festivals, without these being placed securely in the context of learning about a particular religion. Consequently, pupils' understanding of these festivals is confused. Children have few opportunities to develop their understanding by discussing different beliefs with people of other faiths or through visits to other places of worship.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Children enjoy collective worship. They are enthusiastic about the visits of the local vicar and Methodist deacon. They say the humour from worship leaders makes worship fun and they love singing the 'cool' songs which are often used in worship. Parents are very appreciative of the special services they attend, for example at Harvest, Christmas or Easter. These have become so popular that they can no longer be held in the church and now take place in the local community centre, with clergy continuing to provide valued support.

Planning for worship is detailed and covers a wide range of Christian beliefs and themes. Clergy have been consulted about the development of the worship plan. However, the plan moves very quickly through a complex range of beliefs and stories. Consequently, children often do not remember what has been covered in worship and do not explore ideas in depth. As a result, although children are very positive about worship, it is not providing effective support for their understanding of Christian values and beliefs. They have only a limited understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Evaluation with children shows that following an act of worship they are thinking about issues raised and asking questions. However, because these ideas are not revisited, they are not making a lasting impact on pupils. The need to keep up to date with the worship plan sometimes means that leaders do not feel they have the freedom to respond to current events in worship. Children have some understanding of prayer and some pupils have written their own prayers. However, children's prayers are not regularly used in worship. They do not have a deep understanding of why Christians pray and have little understanding of different types of prayer.

The school has been developing the involvement of children in the leadership of worship and there is an expectation that most Key Stage 2 children will be involved in leading worship during any one year. Children say they enjoy worship led by other children. The worship leader has worked hard to evaluate individual acts of worship by recording discussions with children shortly after the worship has taken place. Detailed records of this evaluation

have been kept and have been used to inform development. However, there has not been any evaluation of the wider impact of collective worship on children.

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

There is a shared vision for the school as a caring Christian family. The vision is lived by leaders, staff and pupils. It is evident in caring behaviour management and the supportive approach to dealing with attendance issues. The caring ethos supports personal development very effectively, although staffing issues have contributed to inconsistent progress being made by children in Key Stage 2. The vision is expressed as 'Believe and Achieve' and is explained as 'belief in self, God and community'. However, the school's vision is not fully developed as a Christian vision and there is no shared understanding of how the school's values are rooted in Christian teaching. Although Christian values are evident in practice, they are not made explicit to pupils. The school is beginning the process of reviewing this vision.

The leader of collective worship and RE has worked creatively to move these areas forward. She has developed some innovative ideas which are having a positive impact on practice. Both collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. However, self-evaluation of collective worship and RE has a limited impact on planning. The co-ordinator has carried out a book scrutiny for RE, but she has not yet been able to carry out observations of RE lessons to monitor learning and teaching. Although collective worship is included in the school development plan, RE and other aspects of the school's Christian character are not included. This means there is no formal planning for many aspects of the school as a church school and procedures for self-evaluation are not secured by being incorporated into the school's development cycle.

The school has made limited use of national and global partnerships to enhance children's understanding of the world in which they live. The church has joined with the school in sponsoring a child in Uganda, but at present many pupils are not aware of this and therefore it has not had an impact on their thinking as global citizens. There are currently few opportunities for pupils to meet people of other faiths or visit different places of worship. This is contributing to their weak understanding of cultural and religious diversity.

Staff development related to church school issues is limited. Staff have been supported in developing collective worship. However, there has been no training for all staff to support the development of RE or other aspects of the school's Christian character. In recent years there has not been a productive relationship with the local diocese and the school has only occasionally accessed training. This has significantly limited the school's understanding of best practice in church schools. The school has made a response to the focus for development from the last SIAS report, but lack of rigorous self-evaluation means that the impact of this on pupils varies.

There are effective partnerships with the local vicar and Methodist deacon which enrich worship and provide valued pastoral support. Governors are supportive of the school and have discussed some church school issues. However, they have not been involved in recent self-evaluation of church school issues. Nevertheless, governors and many staff are keen to further develop the school as a church school and are looking for ways to move the school forward.

SIAMS report March 2018 Rockcliffe Church of England School, Rockcliffe, Cumbria. CA6 4AA