

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ovingham Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Ovingham Northumberland NE42 6DE	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Newcastle
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Northumberland
Date/s of inspection	29 September 2017
Date of last inspection	18 September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	122278
Headteacher	Julie Raistrick
Inspector's name and number	David Tait 887

School context

Ovingham is a smaller than average first school situated in Northumberland with 117 pupils on roll. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and the proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British background. The headteacher has been in post for seventeen years. At the most recent Ofsted inspection the school was graded 'outstanding'. A significant proportion of pupils travel from outside the immediate area. The school is due to convert to academy status as part of the Tynedale Community Learning Trust MAT in spring 2018.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ovingham as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values are articulated clearly by all of the school family and permeate the curriculum. They impact positively on the care and support given to each pupil and this in turn enables pupils to grow academically and spiritually.
- Thought-provoking and meaningful acts of worship are valued by the whole school community and lead to a distinctively Christian shared vision which guides all behaviour and relationships.
- The highly effective support given to those who lead collective worship and religious education (RE) ensures that practice in both areas is highly effective.
- Leaders work diligently, within the context of their guiding Christian values, to realise the potential of all.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' confidence in planning, leading and evaluating complete acts of worship.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of the Holy Trinity in order to increase their appreciation of Anglican traditions.
- Build upon the strong relationships established with the local church and wider community to preserve the distinctive Christian ethos of the school as it moves to academy status within an academy trust which leads church and non-church schools.

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

A distinctively Christian atmosphere rooted in gospel values permeates this small and welcoming school. All members of the school community clearly articulate the Christian values that underpin the whole work of the school. The school lives out, through the actions of its members, the aim of its mission statement, 'to promote Christian values through the experiences it offers'. The values of love, friendship, compassion and forgiveness impact greatly on the school community and are evident in pupils' excellent behaviour, achievements, school attendance and enjoyment of the wide curriculum offered. Parents are proud and enthusiastic about their school as a place where 'all feel welcome and comfortable.' This in turn leads to constructive partnerships that enable relationships to flourish. Children often speak with enthusiasm in conversation with their parents about their work in RE and the themes of collective worship and thus the school's work in these areas makes a significant contribution to its ethos. Pupils and staff are excited and confident to share their views on matters of faith and to reflect on themes of meaning and purpose. Children describe their school as a prayerful and nurturing place where 'even though people are different, they are all loved by God.' Learners have many opportunities to engage in high quality experiences that develop a personal spirituality. These include imaginative indoor and outdoor areas for reflection, regular visits to places of interest and reflective areas in each classroom. All these activities enrich the learning experience, afford opportunities for children to offer themselves in the service of others. As well as this, children are able to celebrate achievements, experience awe and wonder and have many opportunities to live out through their actions the Christian values of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of Christianity as a living world faith. Together with the considered way in which the school teaches pupils about other world faiths, this leads to diversity being celebrated and all being valued. Pupils are exceptionally well developed in terms of their social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is understood by everyone as central to the whole life of the school. Children say the rich biblical material that forms the basis of worship helps them greatly both at home and at school. In the words of one child, the stories and themes used in worship help you 'become the person God wants you to be.' This leads naturally to service for others being willingly offered and the motivation for this being expressed in distinctly Christian terms. Children support a variety of charities throughout the year both within the local community and beyond. For example, on the day of inspection, children prepared and ran a cake sale in order to support the Macmillan cancer charity. An extensive worship calendar which encompasses Anglican tradition, the times and seasons of the church's year and Christian values is in place. This provides a rich framework for worship whilst ensuring continuity in a variety of formats. All staff attend and share in leadership, along with local clergy and occasional visitors enriching children's experience in order to maintain and further develop the excellent provision established. An example of this is the thoughtful welcome worship prepared by the pupils for the recently appointed incumbent. Governors and parents often attend school worship and clergy regularly lead and discusses developments with school leaders. The school has been tenacious in securing a range of leaders of worship during the recent interregnum, with the result that diversity of leadership and the high quality of worship have been sustained. The person of Jesus features very strongly in worship and children are familiar with a range of biblical stories. Children understand the central place Jesus occupies in worship. There is some understanding of each of the aspects of the Holy Trinity, but this is insufficiently developed. The committed and experienced worship coordinator ensures consistency and a culture of continued improvement through regular shared monitoring with the clergy, evaluations by children, staff discussion and support from the diocese. The active involvement of children in leading worship is well developed. There is scope to improve pupils' confidence to lead entire acts of worship and subsequently evaluate these in order to ensure continued future improvements. Prayer is a vital thread running through the life of the school. Children greatly value prayer and understand its importance. They seize the variety of opportunities offered to them for personal prayer, knowing that it is a time to 'come close to God'. Links with the local church are strong and this has ensured consistently effective support for the leadership of worship.

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

School leaders consistently articulate and live out in their practice a vision for the school community which is rooted in distinctively Christian values. In turn, these values have a significant impact on the lives of both the children and the wider school family. Academic outcomes for pupils are high and they are improving over time. This is directly attributable to the school's Christian mission to meet the unique needs of all children. The headteacher has a very clear grasp of what it means to be a church school and understands how values make a difference to the lives of children and adults in the school community. This vision is shared by all members of the school community including staff, children and their parents. The headteacher and her staff are well-supported and challenged by highly committed governors who are passionate about their church school. Through effective monitoring and self-

evaluation, which accurately identify further areas to improve as a church school, they secure the school's Christian distinctiveness. As a result, the areas identified at the previous inspection concerning opportunities for reflection and stillness, and the practice of self-evaluation, have been successfully addressed. As the school moves towards academy status, leaders have demonstrated commitment and determination in ensuring that the school's explicit values are at the heart of all of their decision making. Parents feel proud of their school which is at the heart of village life. They are involved and welcomed as part of this family, which has a place for everyone, irrespective of need. Parents report that their children come home and confidently share the Bible stories and teaching from collective worship. One parent said their child 'just loved RE' and the recognition of difference and diversity that it promoted. The school's Christian values are lived out through the school working together to achieve the best for its community. Considered and thoughtful opportunities and partnerships have a clear benefit to all groups. This is particularly evident in the close relationships established with all partners who are to come together to form the academy trust. The school has excellent links with the local church and receives good support as part of the local cluster of schools. The school is aware of the issue of the future leadership of church schools and the headteacher has been proactive in establishing links with both local church schools and the diocese in order to strengthen leadership through collaboration. Succession planning opportunities have been provided by developing staff skills and talents. RE is very well led, managed and resourced. The headteacher monitors RE lessons and has developed additional materials to enhance schemes of work with the support of parish clergy. As a result, they best meet the needs of the pupils. Consequently, RE and worship both meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report September 2017 Ovingham CE VC First School, Ovingham NE42 6DE