

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Selside Endowed Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Selside, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 9LB	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Carlisle
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Cumbria
Date of inspection	17 March 2017
Date of last inspection	February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 112327
Headteacher	Mark Squires
Inspector's name and number	Anne B. Woodcock 445

School context

Selside is a very small school. It serves a widespread, predominantly rural community north of Kendal. Virtually all of the 64 pupils are of White British heritage. Many come from advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The school does not receive any additional funding for socially disadvantaged pupils. The school supports an average proportion of pupils with additional needs. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. The headteacher and senior teacher have been in post since September 2014. The headteacher, who has a 50% teaching commitment, was not in school at the time of the inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Selside Endowed as a Church of England school are **satisfactory**

- The headteacher and governors have not ensured that the school's Christian vision is clearly articulated and understood by members of the school community. It does not drive church school improvement and is not rigorously evaluated to inform future planning.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to life and learning are founded on their understanding the Christian values of friendship, respect and responsibility.
- Strong relationships based, on the Christian values of love and trust nurture and support all members of the school community.

Areas to improve

- Review the school's mission and vision statements with the whole community and embed procedures for self-evaluation of the school as a church school into the school's improvement cycle. This is so that church school distinctiveness is prioritised and leads to continued school improvement.
- Create a system for the planning, recording and evaluation of collective worship using feedback from pupils, staff and visitors. This is to assess the impact of worship and to ensure that feedback informs planning.
- Make more effective use of assessment in religious education (RE) so that it effectively tracks pupils' progress, identifies gaps in learning to inform future planning and raises standards.

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

The school's well-established Christian character and welcoming, creative atmosphere is immediately felt by visitors. The core Christian values of trust, friendship, respect, honesty were chosen by staff and pupils together. They are evident in strong, supportive relationships and in the nurture and care provided for all members of the school family. 'Our values come from Jesus' teaching. They show us how to treat others and think about how to help people,' explained a Year 4 pupil. Behaviour is very good because pupils strive to apply the values of Christian friendship within their daily lives. Attendance is good because pupils are eager to learn. They enjoy the challenges provided and are determined to meet them through their personal 'plan, do, review' learning patterns. The school's inclusive Christian character is reflected in the way in which all pupils are valued as unique and special children of God. All pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Standards of attainment are consistently good and often exceed national expectations. Those with additional needs are well-supported within the mixed-age classes. As a result, the school meets its declared aim 'to create a caring, imaginative, enjoyable environment of learning and experience wherein each child can achieve their full potential'. Pupils' spiritual development is good because it is prioritised and planned creatively throughout the curriculum. Provision through extended outdoor learning helps pupils to consider their responsibilities for the conservation of the natural world. Pupils are eager, confident and articulate learners. They respond to their varied activities and experiences creatively through art, prose and prayer. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and personal well-being is good. They grow in self-esteem and confidence within a caring Christian environment. Parents confirm this and explain that their children reflect their learning about Christian values in their everyday lives. One Year 6 pupil, reflecting on responsibility, wrote 'If you are respectful and responsible in a community, everyone will have social harmony.' Pupils talk knowledgeably about issues of injustice and inequality, linking these to their worship discussions, creative topic themes and work in RE. RE makes a positive contribution to the school's Christian character. The study of faiths other than their own helps pupils to understand and respect different cultural beliefs and ways of life. They recognise the need to help those less fortunate than themselves and so raise money for charities such as Children in Need. 'You should be generous and give to people like refugees who need charity,' stated a Year 2 pupil discussing the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Most pupils enjoy and value their collective worship experiences because they feel included. Pupils have a growing knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus. Some talk confidently about parables such as the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son. They explain that Jesus used these stories to help people to understand how God wants everyone to show the love and care for others that he shows for us. 'The stories make you think about how to treat people, to show kindness and respect,' explained a Year 5 pupil. Pupils recognise that when they help those in need they are striving to apply Jesus' teaching about love and generosity. They understand important beliefs about Jesus, explaining that he is the Son of God, a teacher, healer and miracle-worker sent to show people how to live better lives. However, their awareness of the Christian concept of the Trinity is at a very early stage because it is not yet regularly included in the collective worship plan. Pupils experience different styles of Christian worship led by teachers, the vicar and occasional visitors. They participate through reading, helping to act out stories and saying prayers. They are engaged and respond willingly to questions. They help to plan and deliver the special festival services held in church. However, they do not regularly take responsibility for planning and delivering aspects of worship in school. The issue from the previous denominational inspection has not therefore been fully addressed. Daily worship includes key features which encourage pupils and staff to engage and respond. Prayer and reflection are key features of worship. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and they write prayers, some of which are used during worship and at other times of the day. Collections of their prayers kept in books and on the Lenten Prayer tree reflect their understanding of thankfulness, praise and forgiveness. Pupils also appreciate stillness and the time to reflect on the awe and wonder of God's world during their regular outdoor learning activities. Planning ensures that Christian values, festivals and Bible teaching are central to daily worship. It ensures that pupils regularly discuss topical and global issues. These are linked to Christian values and help pupils to recognise that they can make a difference through personal service to others. Self-evaluation has had a limited impact on the development of collective worship. Informal feedback from pupils has led to some changes in the settings for worship and to the way in which pupils participate. However, there is no formal recording of monitoring and evaluation by governors and leaders. As a result, the process has not always led to significant improvements, so the high standard of worship at the time of the last denominational inspection has not been maintained.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Pupils' attitudes are very positive because they enjoy their RE lessons. Two Year 6 pupils explained, 'I'm not religious but I enjoy learning about God. It is good to share our thoughts and beliefs.' Pupils enjoy the question-based curriculum. They investigate and interpret ideas, using a variety of activities which meet the needs of the mixed-age and ability classes. For example, young children working on the Good Samaritan explored the parable through role play, painting and the creation of puppets and story boards. One Year 2 pupil suggested that the story reflected 'global kindness' because it made her think about the plight of refugees. The majority of teaching is good and teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Appropriately challenging work supports pupils' progress and standards are in line with those expected nationally. Work is well-presented and the responses of some older pupils show a level of mature thought and reflection. This was evident in their consideration of rights, responsibilities and dilemmas relating to Christian ideas of forgiveness. The RE curriculum supports pupils' SMSC development. Christian values are reinforced and developed through the study of Christianity and diverse faiths and cultures. Pupils explore ideas and beliefs. They respond creatively using art and drama. They have some knowledge of the key features of Islam and Judaism. However, they are not always able to identify similarities and differences. They do not have first-hand experience of meeting people of different faith or visiting places of worship to support their learning. Procedures for assessment and the monitoring of RE are not robust. Feedback to pupils identifies ways in which work can be improved and celebrates achievement. However, pupils' progress is not recorded and tracked effectively so gaps in learning are not consistently identified to inform future planning. As a result standards of achievement have not continued to improve.

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

The headteacher and governors have not maintained the previously outstanding practice. They have relied too heavily upon the school's established Christian character to sustain rather than further develop good practice. Governors and senior leaders have not ensured that the focuses for development from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed. Governors have not challenged the school effectively. The school's vision to provide a collaborative, creative learning environment in which every child can blossom and grow is clearly expressed. However, this is not an explicitly Christian vision. The headteacher has created a small, unified staff team. They support each other very well and they strive to maintain and develop the standards for which the school is known. All members of the school community recognise that the values established and agreed two years ago continue to have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Parents value the well-developed family ethos which supports and nurtures their children. Governors have recognised the need to become more strategic in their approach. They support the work of the school. Plans are in place for further training to develop their role as governors of a church school. Governors continue to deal with the challenges of human and financial resource issues within a small school with Christian compassion, ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met. They know the school's strengths and areas for improvement through their regular monitoring visits. Governors recognise that whilst standards and pupils' progress have been maintained, the school's Christian character is implicit rather than explicitly expressed. They recognised that more space is needed for work and worship. The extension currently being built will meet this need. This means that parents can attend and the additional space will allow pupils to participate more actively in a variety of ways. However, although the headteacher and governors know the school well, they have not used this information to effectively maintain and develop the school's previously outstanding distinctiveness and effectiveness. The church school self-evaluation process lacks rigour because it is not undertaken at regular intervals. As a result, church school issues are not fully prioritised within whole school improvement planning and reviews of the mission statement and the school's vision and values have not been undertaken. Governors support and resource both RE and collective worship, ensuring that both meet statutory regulations. However, the leadership of RE and collective worship has not maintained the previously outstanding practice. Membership of the Kendal Collaborative Partnership supports continued professional development. Staff value the opportunities provided to work with other church schools to develop and improve skills, particularly those related to the teaching of RE and spiritual provision. Diocesan links support leadership and governance. Links with the church remain strong and pupils are regularly engaged in community events, as showcased by the 'Selside Echo', the school's newspaper written and edited by pupils. Pupils are confident that their opinions are heard and acted upon. For example, they talk excitedly about the new building for which they are helping to raise funds. They have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in their local community and the wider world.

SIAMS report March 2017, Selside Endowed CE Primary School, Selside, Kendal LA8 9LB