



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Grayrigg Church of England Primary School	Grayrigg, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 9BU
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese/Methodist District	Carlisle
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Inadequate
Local authority	Cumbria
Date of inspection	13 October 2016
Date of last inspection	10 October 2013
School's unique reference number	112320
Headteacher	Kirsty Cooper
Inspector's name and number	Anne B. Woodcock 445

School context

Grayrigg is a very small school. It serves rural communities north of Kendal in the South Lakes, but some pupils travel from Kendal and beyond to attend. The vast majority of the 31 pupils are of White British heritage and they come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. At present no pupils are known to attract additional funding for social disadvantage. The school supports an average proportion of pupils with additional needs. Children are taught in two mixed-age classes. The nursery opened in school in September 2016 currently has 9 pupils. The school benefits from extensive outdoor learning facilities which include a forest. The headteacher's post was made substantive in January 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Grayrigg as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher's determined Christian leadership, ably supported by staff and governors, has unified the school community and inspired rapid changes. This has strengthened all aspects of church school distinctiveness and effectiveness.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to life and learning demonstrate their understanding of the school's Christian values.
- Pupils' spiritual growth and personal development is very well-promoted by the creative and purposeful use of outdoor and collaborative learning.

Areas to improve

- Involve pupils in assessing their own work and progress in religious education (RE) so that they can clearly identify what they are doing well and understand how to improve.
- Extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures and faiths through a programme of visits and visitors so that they understand and respect differences.
- Support pupils in writing and using a wider range of prayers for private and public use, to support their understanding of the purpose of prayer.

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

Christian values are at the heart of the school. Children who talk confidently about how they use Christian friendship, forgiveness and compassion. 'You have to show that you understand a value by actually doing something,' explained a Year 5 pupil. Another said, 'Jesus gave us the values through his teaching. We forgive each other and help those in need to be a little bit like Jesus.' Behaviour is extremely good because all children strive to apply Christian values. Older children share their time and skills with younger children willingly. Year 5 and 6 pupils are 'ethos leaders' whose responsibilities include ensuring that Christian values are put into action. They accept the responsibility eagerly by, for example, raising funds for charities. Such responsibilities raise confidence and self-esteem. This is recognised by parents as making a significant difference to the way in which their children mature and grow as individuals. Pupils are confident and reflective learners who enjoy their varied learning experiences. Every child is valued as a unique child of God. This is evident in the way the needs of every child are met. All pupils make good progress from their starting points. Standards of attainment continue to rise through well-targeted support and high expectations. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is promoted very well across the curriculum. As a result, their spiritual and personal development is good. Frequent outdoor learning in the superb outdoor classroom and weekly forest school visits provide high quality experiences in which children explore creation and experience stillness. Children express their ideas imaginatively through dance and art, such as the dance developed in response to their reading of the story 'Hanna's Suitcase'. They discuss world issues such as refugees and war in Syria thoughtfully. One Year 6 pupil stated, 'It's desperate and it is not what God wants to happen. All people should be able to live in peace.' RE contributes well to children's spiritual development and to their growing understanding of diverse faiths and cultures.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Children enjoy collective worship. Themes are based on Bible teaching and Christian values. 'Jesus gave us the values. He told parables like the Lost Son to teach about forgiveness,' stated a Year 6 pupil. Children are familiar with Bible stories because they are used from the earliest years. Older children talk confidently about events in Jesus' life. 'Jesus chose to live on earth and die for us as God planned,' explained a Year 6 pupil. Children talk about God as a loving father who always wants the best for his children. 'Jesus is God's son who died for us to save people for ever,' stated a Year 5 pupil. Levels of pupil participation in leading worship are exemplary. The ethos leaders take responsibility for delivering worship every Friday. One explained, 'We set up our own worship to do with the little ones. We plan it and choose stories to match our value. I really love doing it!' Their evaluations are insightful. For example, after leading worship about friendship for the youngest children, one ethos group realised that the children had little idea of what a good friend was. So they decided to explore that idea further, before introducing the idea of Jesus as a friend. Collective worship is inspirational and inclusive. Some Year 6 children, staff and parents have been challenged to think deeply about their own beliefs as a result of worship. Links with the church make a positive impact on the school's worship life. Children regularly experience traditional Anglican worship in church. Special festival services and events such as 'Experience Pentecost' are held in church. Children know and use traditional prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer. Prayer is used at different times of the day and time is given for reflection and stillness. Children write prayers with confidence. However, their understanding of the purpose of different forms of prayer is limited, so they do not always support their spiritual journey. Collective worship is very effectively monitored by governors and staff. Pupils provide frequent feedback which is used to inform future planning and assess the positive impact of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) is good

RE is a much valued core subject. Children enjoy and are excited by their learning. 'RE is fun. Its active and we do lots of different things to help us understand,' explained a Year 6 pupil. 'It makes you think about what you believe. Your opinion matters.' A good balance is achieved between learning about and learning from religion. Children explore themes through challenging questions which encourage independent thinking and enquiry. Skilful teacher questioning and grouping of pupils supports learners as they develop evaluation and enquiry skills. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and standards of attainment are in line with those achieved in other core subjects. Pupil's work and displays reflect their skills and personal responses. 'We made these crosses in RE. They show our relationship with God,' stated a Year 4 pupil. RE makes a positive contribution to children's SMSC

development. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were comparing two stories used in Christian and Buddhist traditions. They identified similarities and differences. 'I didn't think they would be so similar. Both Buddhists and Christians share values like humility,' commented a Year 4 pupil. They know some key features of Islam and Buddhism but they have limited opportunities to experience different places of worship or cultures at first-hand. As a result, their understanding of diverse faiths is limited. RE has a high profile. It is well-led by the headteacher who has brought about substantial improvements in teaching, learning and assessment which continue to raise standards. Diocesan training and advice has been instrumental in this process. Assessment processes track pupils' progress and inform future planning effectively. Marking supports pupils' progress. However, although pupils respond to feedback, they are not regularly involved in assessing their own work or progress at the end of units of study, so they do not always have a clear idea of how to improve. RE is effectively monitored and evaluated by staff and governors. Feedback is used to inform improvement planning.

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

The inspirational Christian leadership of the headteacher has unified the school and substantially raised standards. The rapid and sustained improvements made since the last inspection have impacted strongly on the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness. This is recognised by all members of the school family. Parents have great confidence in the headteacher's passion and drive, saying that all pupils are treated as individuals so they 'blossom'. The strong focus on agreed Christian values has driven all that has been achieved. All members of the school community own and share the values because they were involved in the decision-making process. Governors have secured an effective church school self-evaluation process which engages members of the church, parents and school. It provides insightful feedback which is used to inform development planning and leads directly to continued improvement. All issues from the previous inspection have been thoroughly addressed. The significant changes made continue to be evaluated and developed. As a result, standards have risen and pupils' progress continues to improve. Governors have secured strong leadership for RE and collective worship. They ensure that both are well-supported and resourced. Partnerships with the church, diocese and local church schools have been instrumental in raising standards. Diocesan training and advice for staff, leaders and governors have supported teaching, learning and governance. Strategic planning is good. Middle leaders take responsibility for raising standards. This supports the continued development of the school. The headteacher's Christian leadership course, which was part-funded by the church, has inspired change and raised expectations. The level of pupils' participation in the school's decision-making is exemplary. Ethos leaders and the Year 3 and 4 'ethos crew' take responsibility for fundraising, worship and play leadership. They present their ideas to governors and parents confidently. 'David and Goliath is our school's Bible story,' explained a member of the ethos group. 'It reminds us that God is on our side. We are small, but we think big. We can be what we want to be.'

SIAMS report October 2016 Grayrigg Church of England Primary School, Grayrigg, Kendal, Cumbria LA8 9BU