

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Sleights Church of England Primary School

<b>Address</b>	Ingham Close, Sleights, Whitby, North Yorkshire, YO22 5DN		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	28 March 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Diocese</b>	York	<b>URN</b>	121491

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
<b>Additional Judgement</b>		
<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

#### School context

Sleights is a primary school with 107 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than national averages. Since the last inspection, the school has appointed the current headteacher and there have been significant changes to staffing and governance.

#### The school's Christian vision

*'Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.'* (Psalm 92:13)  
Working together to be happy; to flourish; to succeed through our Christian values of perseverance, respect and trust.

#### Key findings

- The strength of the refreshed Christian vision has driven forward the school's rapid and positive improvement journey. The chosen biblical text emphasises its importance for all aspects of learning and nurture in this Church of England school.
- The school provides focused support for the wide-ranging individual needs of pupils. This provision is in response to the biblical teaching of the infinite value of each person as a child of God.
- Respectful relationships between all members of the school community create a learning environment of happiness and positive encouragement that nurtures success within each pupil's learning journey.
- Collective worship, at heart of school life, ensures the biblical roots of the chosen core Christian values are clearly understood. They also provide inclusive opportunities for courteous discussion and sharing of ideas and beliefs amongst those present.
- The exciting learning challenges of religious education (RE) support pupils of all abilities and viewpoints to grow in understanding of major world faiths and respect for contrasting personal beliefs.

#### Areas for development

- Build on the school's charitable outreach by enabling pupils themselves to promote and act upon their personal priorities for social action and change, to support the needy and care for God's created world.
- Provide learning opportunities that promote wider understanding of global diversity in belief, language and lifestyle in order to help pupils develop respect, tolerance and empathy for a greater range of cultures and beliefs.
- Extend pupils' roles in assisting with collective worship to include appropriate development of their leadership skills. This will empower pupils to lead worship confidently, without the need for adult intervention.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

### Inspection findings

Led by the personal commitment of the inspirational headteacher, Sleights school community lives out its refreshed Christian vision in every aspect of its work. All members of the school have contributed to its development, ensuring it is a Christian vision not just for the pupils, but for all stakeholders. Its biblical text upholds three carefully selected core Christian values. These values, perseverance, respect and trust, are used by all stakeholders as the underpinning reasons for their choices of action or response. Parents explain that their children also choose to demonstrate the values within their home lives. Thus the school's Christian vision successfully reaches out into the wider local community. It also nurtures the development of pupils' personal spirituality, arising from the awe and wonder that are experienced within their learning and collective worship. For some pupils this develops into a personal connection with God through prayer and reflection.

There is a pervasive sense of love and care for others in the school, modelled by the staff in their work and interaction, and emulated by the pupils, who are placed at the centre of school life. This results in the highest standards of respectful, considerate behaviour and a supportive atmosphere in which all pupils work and play happily together. A young pupil summarised this as, 'We make smiles at our school.' Instances of bullying and discrimination are exceptionally rare and quickly eliminated by timely staff intervention. Pupils know the importance of apology and forgiveness. One pupil explained, 'Saying sorry can make things feel different and better.' The school supports pupils in becoming confident and resilient learners, ambitious to achieve well. Pupils know that in order to achieve their best they will need to consider the core value of perseverance. This courageous determination for success is regarded as a way of living out the school's Christian vision.

A decline in academic outcomes for Year 6 pupils in the 2018 cohort has meant that pupil progress and achievement through school is regarded as a priority for improvement. School data indicates that this focus is having a positive effect. Potential barriers to learning are addressed with personalised 'rapid improvement plans' that lead to pupils making significant progress. Exciting, targeted opportunities for pupils are enabling them to excel at a higher standard in more advanced work. Governors have established 'priority partnership' roles, which enable them to evaluate progress within the annual school development plans. They are therefore skilled in monitoring how well the Christian vision and values drive forward every aspect of school life, including pupils' progress and achievement.

The school's ongoing development programme is well supported by active membership of the local schools' alliance, in which Sleights offers and receives targeted support, working with neighbouring schools. The diocesan education team has played an important role in supporting the school's recent improvement journey, assisted by guidance from the local authority. Staff and governors all benefit from a range of ongoing professional development opportunities.

Pupils show their Christian stewardship in their thoughtful fundraising, often targeted at concerns with a local focus. Pupils also show practical care for others. The youngest pupils socialise happily with older local residents. Older pupils engage in community action in connection with the Archbishop of York's young leaders' award scheme. Pupils are respectfully accepting of difference in lifestyle, faith and language but the rural location of the school limits pupils' outreach. They readily express compassion for global problems, epitomised by a pupil who, after exceptional storm damage in Africa was widely reported, said, 'I so hope the people in Malawi will be alright'. Therefore opportunities need to be developed to widen pupils' appreciation of national and global issues, alongside ways to support them in turning their concerns into a programme of social action.

The school's supportive family links ensure that pupils' needs are met through practical support that goes well beyond the usual level of response. This impressive dedication typifies the value placed on every pupil. Concern for individuals also extends to adults. The school supports the wellbeing and mental health of all stakeholders. Because pupils are now excited by their learning, they want to be in school regularly, so lifting attendance percentages to meet national expectations.

RE is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus, recently augmented by the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. This addition enables the school to comply with the Statement of Entitlement for RE in Church schools. The resource has already created significant interest amongst pupils and is extending their use of theological language. The RE subject leader has assisted colleagues with the introduction of these materials whilst continuing to support and monitor the high quality of pupils' RE learning. Pupils of all abilities enjoy RE because its learning approaches enable all to achieve well. RE topics are often linked to collective worship themes and the wider curriculum, therefore extending the subject's influence within school life. Use of inclusive discussion and debate in RE enables pupils of faith or none to reflect upon personal beliefs, and to be challenged by the big

questions of life and religion.

Daily collective worship firmly endorses the message of the school's Christian vision. Pupils engage with enthusiasm in the invitational worship life of the school and respectfully share opinions that include those of faith alongside others of no particular belief. Most themes for worship are biblically based, expanding and refreshing the school community's understanding of Christian values. The systematically evaluated worship themes include a specific focus on the major festivals of the Anglican church year. These festivals provide opportunities to enable pupils to grow in understanding of the Christian teaching of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils experience a variety of different worship styles from the regular worship leaders, comprising teachers, Methodist minister and vicar. Pupils are also involved in aspects of worship leadership but they do not lead worship without adult direction.

Times of respectful open reflection and prayer are integral to all worship, and continue through the school day. Pupils often volunteer to write prayers for use at such times. There are engaging reflection areas in each classroom and in the school grounds, which are well used by the school community.

Pupils' understanding of Anglican worship tradition is enriched by the school regularly worshipping, with their families, in St John's church at the major Christian festivals. These services widen the school's mutually beneficial local links with the community. This enables pupils to feel part of the wider Christian family.

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