

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Lythe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

High Street, Lythe, Whitby YO21 3RT	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	York
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Date of inspection	3 March 2017
Date of last inspection	July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 121507
Headteacher	Lisa Armstrong
Inspector's name and number	Paul Bramley 326

School context

Lythe is a smaller than average primary school, situated in a rural village positioned close to the town of Whitby. It caters for 89 children aged from 3 - 11 years of age, with the majority attending from socially advantaged backgrounds. It serves the local village and has a significant number attending from the surrounding area. The proportion of children qualifying for pupil premium support is lower than the national average, as is those identified as having special needs and/or disability. All of the children are of White British background. The headteacher was appointed in November 2015.

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

- Christian values are embedded within the vision, mission and practice of the school and have a positive impact on learners who achieve well.
- Collective worship is both inclusive and creative, based on Anglican tradition, and engages and excites pupils.
- Close links between the church and the school enhance its distinctiveness and enable the community to see both as one family.
- Relationships modelled throughout the school, based on explicit Christian values, such as trust, friendship and respect, impact very positively on all within this community.

Areas to improve

- Increase opportunities for children to be involved in the planning, preparation and delivery of collective worship.
- Develop areas within the school, particularly within the classrooms, to allow children time and space for individual spiritual reflection and prayer.

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

This school is a very happy place, where Christian values underpin all aspects of the school's work. A vision created and shared by the headteacher, governors, parents and church is evident in literature, practice and in the day to day life of the school. Children greatly enjoy attending, resulting in excellent behaviour and in a lively, welcoming

atmosphere. Parents and carers speak with enthusiasm as to how they are welcomed at every opportunity. They are invited to offer suggestions and comments on a number of matters, including the relevance of being a church school. All feel able to share concerns with staff at any time. Relationships at the school are excellent, with the school's values focussing on care, community, friendship and respect for the world. These values underpin the family atmosphere created. The values support the achievement and attainment seen in recent years, in particular with younger children, and more recently in making a positive impact across the whole school. Should achievement prove challenging, Christian values strengthen staff resolve to ensure a highly detailed and supportive approach to tackling concerns. Children understand how these values affect their learning. They talk of the importance of being a team and of persevering no matter how difficult things are, demonstrating that their moral and social development is therefore good. On entering the school one is immediately aware that this is a church school, and of the strength of its relationship with the diocese and the wider church. Photographs of the visits of senior clergy are displayed and celebrated along with passages from scripture. There is a visual reminder of the Christian foundation of the school and of the impact of this on daily life. For example, in the openness and confidence of the children. The links with the local church are strong, particularly with the curate who visits regularly. The curate enjoys a prominent role in the life of the school, including through her work as a foundation governor. This link is greatly valued by parents and carers. They relate celebrations and worship at church with great enthusiasm. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, the head, staff and governors have worked hard to ensure that Lythe's profile as a Church of England primary school is celebrated and developed. The school website and significant documentation use every opportunity to celebrate the Anglican foundation of the school. Within the curriculum, religious education (RE) is greatly valued, supporting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, and impacting positively on the school's Christian character. Pupils speak effortlessly and with assurance about faith and beliefs and make links between what they have learnt in RE with their own lives. Topics on other faiths such as Islam provide an insight into a range of cultures different from their own. Visits to and from people of other faiths occur. Living in a significantly mono-cultural community, all connected to the school welcome such experiences to increase global awareness so that children have a greater knowledge of the wider world community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is enjoyed by all and is central to the daily life of the school. Its strength is in it being both creative and inclusive. Planning is good and follows the church calendar, with Anglican symbolism and practice evident. For example, the use of the Bible, cross and candles, and especially through the sung responses. Children speak with great enthusiasm about this time of day and reflect extremely well on Biblical stories and teachings. They relate how these impact on their own lives. For example, one child discusses how trust is so important in their friendships. Worship also clearly links Bible stories to values that are important to the life of the school. For example, a Biblical story relating to justice is skilfully linked to the celebration of world book day. Children comment openly on the injustice in our world at times. A good policy is in place that illustrates the importance of this activity to the school. Children regularly take part in worship via reading, lighting candles, and writing prayers. They would, however, appreciate being further involved in the planning and leading of this activity. The school has noted this in its self-evaluation. Parents value their children's experience of collective worship and talk with enthusiasm about the roles that their children play in this aspect of school life. They relate times at home when collective worship is re-enacted and messages of the day retold. Children totally engage with worship and behaviour is exemplary. They respond with enthusiasm to opportunities to read, act, sing, pray and reflect. Children are developing an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through worship. For example, through stories, prayer, blessings and sung responses. The headteacher and foundation governors monitor collective worship with children asked to offer opinions and suggestions. For example, the timing of worship was moved at the request of children to a time more suited to peacefulness and reflection. Links with the church are good, with the school visiting for major festivals. Parents and carers are invited to these occasions and attendance is excellent. Prayer is important to the school. Children frequently write their own and use these during collective worship and at times in the school day. Within worship, children have the opportunity for personal reflection and prayer. Space for such activity exists within the school's beautiful grounds, such as the reflection area which is well used and appreciated by all. Such areas are something that staff, children and the community would welcome being developed within the school itself, in particular within the classrooms. They have identified this for future action.

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

This school is well led and managed by the headteacher and governors. Since her appointment, the headteacher has successfully established a sense of family supported by an ethos rooted in a distinctive Christian vision. She is ably supported by a lively and caring staff. The school's vision impacts positively on pupils and has led to a safe and creative environment being created supporting their learning and wellbeing. Staff and governors work well together, striving to make this school successful. Church school objectives are now included in the school development plan

and a governors' spirituality committee is successfully established. The creation of such a group illustrates the great value placed on the Christian foundation of the school. The group shapes direction and future policy and both supports and challenges the leadership of the school. The school's vision is rooted in Christian values and is articulated to the community at every possible opportunity. Leaders clearly state that it is a priority to 'recognise the dignity and inner worth of each child'. Collective worship and RE are seen as being of great importance throughout the school. The leadership of RE and collective worship is very good, with staff constantly seeking ways of providing creative opportunities within RE and with the planning and delivery of worship. Provision for SMSC is also good, ensuring that children develop as confident and compassionate learners. Progress since the last inspection has been good, with all areas for development from the previous inspection having been met in full, including the establishment of a spiritual reflection area in the school grounds. Statutory requirements for RE and worship are met. Governors monitor the distinctive nature of the school, with the foundation governors playing a major role, reporting back at every full governing body meeting. Relationships with the vast majority of parents, carers and the local community are excellent, with frequent opportunities provided for feedback and suggestion. Links with the church and community are good, with children involved in a number of fundraising and church events. The community work together to create a sense of family and encourage people to see the school and church as one. The school is well placed to tackle the challenges of the future. For example, suitability for working in a church school is a priority when appointing new staff, aiming to develop leaders for the future. Governors and staff are clearly empathetic with the ethos and aims of a church school. In addition, the school enjoys numerous links with other settings to help improve practice and to share ideas. It engages well with the Diocese of York and with a number of local agencies thus benefiting from professional development training and support.

SIAMS report March 2017 Lythe CE VC Primary, High Street, Lythe, Whitby YO21 3RT