

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

### Grassington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

<b>Address</b>	Acre Lane, Grassington BD23 5LB		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	31 January 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary Controlled Primary
<b>Diocese</b>	Leeds	<b>URN</b>	121563

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	Requires Improvement
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>	Good

#### School

Grassington is a small rural school with 60 children on roll. Pupil mobility has been relatively high. The school has very low levels of religious and cultural diversity and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school joined three other small rural schools in Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation in February 2017. All share the executive headteacher and single governing body. Significant changes to leadership have occurred in the last 12 months with the retirement of the previous headteacher and subsequent appointment of a part time executive headteacher and two part time headteachers.

#### The school's Christian vision

Our mission is to enrich the lives of our children, inspire them to reach their full potential, to develop a love of learning and to respect and care for one another. We are proud to be a Church of England School. We promote the values and beliefs of the Christian faith while respecting and celebrating the beliefs and cultures of others.

#### Key findings

- Leadership of the school has been strengthened after a period of turbulence, by the recent appointment of a new, highly committed, executive headteacher and the developing partnership with Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation. This has had a positive impact on the school's capacity to develop as a church school.
- Embedded Christian values have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, their optimistic attitudes to learning and their care and respect for each other, which makes Grassington an inclusive and welcoming place.
- Pupil's spiritual and personal development is enriched by the inspiring experiences provided through varied and creative collective worship which impacts on the day to day life of the school.
- In line with the school's vision, religious education and the school's wider curriculum provide some opportunities for pupils to think globally as well as understand, respect and celebrate difference and diversity.
- Leaders and governors are passionate about engaging more effectively with SIAMS evaluation to ensure the Christian vision is understood and drives forward improvements towards becoming a good church school.
- The school's Christian vision of all 'reaching their full potential' is not impacting sufficiently well enough to enable all children to flourish academically.

#### Areas for development

- To develop and embed the school's Christian vision and associated values, to ensure that it is rooted in a clear theology, which is understood by all and impacts on all aspects of the school's life and pupil experience.
- Ensure that a robust and continuous self-evaluation process is in place, involving the school community, to secure a positive impact on the school's effectiveness as a Church school.
- To develop curriculum planning and delivery that it is effectively linked to the Christian vision and is successfully tailored to meet the learning needs of all pupils, including the most vulnerable.

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

Grassington is an inclusive and welcoming school that is supportive and nurturing of pupils and staff. It is seen as being at the heart of the village community. Relationships are strong and rooted in the school's established Christian values of 'all respect and care for one another'. The school has, over recent years experienced changes of leadership and issues associated with becoming federated. This has caused its development as a church school to be too slow since the previous SIAMS inspection. The school is now beginning to make more rapid progress following the recent appointment of the ambitious and committed executive headteacher. She is keen to develop the school's Christian vision and provision and is well supported by the two part time headteachers and the determined and enthusiastic federation governing body. This places the school in a stronger position to become more effective in serving the needs of all pupils. A key development point for the school will be exploration of the deeper theological underpinning of its vision in relation to the school's values and their impact on the life of the school, as well as the practical considerations of resources and organisation. A renewed emphasis on this aspect is demonstrated in the increasing use of a more rigorous and evidenced-based self-evaluation which focuses on impact. In support of their ambition to improve, leaders and governors are committed to staff development that equips teachers to respond to pupil needs and to provide guidance and support to the whole school community. This can be seen in the value placed upon training and provision for mental wellbeing of staff and pupils. Partnership working with the diocese and federation schools is growing and having beneficial effects on the wider life of the school and its community. For example in the work of sharing subject expertise and shared pupil experiences like 'The Big Sing'. Self-evaluation is an area for development in order to ensure that it more clearly informs improvement of Grassington as a church school. Leadership of religious education (RE) has been enhanced and the RE leader, who shows a vibrant passion for teaching and learning in this subject, is working hard to secure rapid improvement. This is being undertaken through the delivery and monitoring of a more effective RE curriculum that raises pupil outcomes and promotes a wider school impact. Links with the local church are excellent and the parish priest is a regular visitor to school. This partnership, alongside support from foundation governors, ensures the school is well placed to ensure its development and improvement. Collective worship has a high profile within the life of the school and contributes well to spiritual development.

Adults put children at the heart of what they do and want what's best for them. Children use the 'Seven C' values and the 'Eight Secrets of Successful Learning' to make positive choices and work hard, even when they find things difficult. The school's improvement plan is aimed at delivering a broad and balanced curriculum which recognises each pupil as an individual. However, current data suggests that this has not yet had full impact, as not all pupils are currently achieving well enough to fulfil the school's vision of 'inspire them to reach their potential' and outcomes have not sufficiently improved. There is evidence of the wider curriculum allowing children to flourish, with a variety of learning opportunities being provided such as learning about the Mayan culture and a 'taste of Africa' theme day. Pupils and parents report that they enjoy learning, particularly in creative topic work. Staff recognise the importance providing opportunities for children to explore and develop their spirituality within every day contexts, as well as in RE and worship. Training undertaken by staff has been effective in developing this aspect of school life and provision has improved.

Pupils are optimistic and say that they think that the change to becoming part of the federation has helped them to feel part of a wider family and less nervous of moving on to the next phase of their education. Parents and children say that they enjoy taking part in partnership activities such as joint educational visits and sports events. This has provided opportunities for pupils to be aspirational for themselves and encouraged hope for their small community. Children increasingly understand and are engaged with environmental issues on a local and global scale and participate in some projects that demonstrate this. This includes the 'Ecotykes' recycling project. Children are proactive in choosing charities to support and are beginning to question the effectiveness these charities and of their own efforts in supporting them. Providing opportunities for children to engage in global links is an area identified by the school as requiring attention in order to expand their understanding of diversity and difference.

The school's Christian vision and associated values promote social and moral development through the practice of forgiveness, reconciliation and using the 'Seven C' Christian values. This was demonstrated during an RE lesson where pupils were asked to consider the notion of injustice in a variety of scenarios. They effectively debated their differing opinions and created poems to express their thoughts. Attendance in school is good with any issues being followed up and support given to families who need it. Pupil behaviour is good and there have been no pupil

exclusions. Pupils know that they can access support from staff when they need it and they say that their concerns are taken seriously. They say that bullying is rare and talk positively of what happens when on those few occasions behaviour is less than good. Staff and children feel they have a voice in school through either staff meetings or the school council. Staff have attended mental health and wellbeing training which they say supports their own wellbeing and supporting children and families who need assistance.

The school's Christian vision and associated values create an environment where pupils can flourish because they are treated with dignity and respect. One child talked very enthusiastically of being asked to describe what faith meant to them in the context of a church school. The school's vision supports inclusion and leaders ensure that children and staff have an acceptance of difference and diversity. Training has supported staff to challenge stereotypes and any form of bullying including that relates to gender, sexual orientation and race. Rare incidents are dealt efficiently, in line with the vision statement of 'caring for all'. The school is now more actively embracing wider opportunities for learning, including visits and visitors to ensure children within a small rural community have opportunities to explore diversity as well as local history. The school has planned for staff training on key aspects of 'valuing all God's Children' and in order to support its vision statement. Safeguarding is of central importance and children and families describe that they feel safe.

Collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring. It is central to the life of the school and offers children and adults a chance to reflect and pray. Children say that they enjoy worship and agree that it is a special time, which requires a special way of behaving. They are encouraged, through reflection and prayer, to think about and develop their own behaviours and actions in line with the school's Christian values and the half termly theme. The link of collective worship to wider learning was evidenced by some children's work related to 'Lady Justice' and the theme of justice. Opportunities for children to develop understanding that prayer is not just part of the daily act of worship but integral to school life are provided in reflection areas in classrooms and evidenced in beautiful class reflection books. Children and adults can undertake quiet, reflective moments at any point in the day and have the opportunity to pray at key points in the day. There is a structured plan for developing children's understanding of Christian values within the context of worship, with a theme taken for each half term. Collective worship is time when the teachings of Jesus and Bible are considered and children can reflect on how this might affect their daily lives, irrespective of whether they are Christian or not. The local church is used by the school for key services throughout the year. People from other local Christian ministries and organisations such as a 'centre for retreat' are effectively used to develop children's understanding of diversity within the Christian tradition. The concept of global diversity is an area for development. Christian festivals are celebrated and the liturgical year followed and a variety of people including clergy lead worship. Parents are invited to attend services and a weekly 'praise' worship. Children enjoy and are skilled at planning and leading worship through the worship committee. Their involvement in its evaluation is not as well developed and is an area for the school to consider. Governors visit collective worship and complete a governor monitoring form. To be more effective, governors must ensure it is more evaluative to afford greater impact on worship and support the school's worship leader in the school's programme of monitoring and evaluation. Partnership with the local church community and parish priest is very strong and provides both practical and theological support to leaders and governors.

Religious Education (RE) is given a high priority and weekly RE lessons are delivered across the school by newly appointed subject leader. The school is developing a 'rolling programme of study' with other Federation Church schools in line with the North Yorkshire syllabus and understanding Christianity, to ensure that children receive their statutory RE provision. This has supported children in more effectively learning about the Christian faith whilst developing understanding and respect for other religions and worldviews. Children are encouraged to question and be more evaluative in RE and topic work. This has enabled them to ask questions such as 'Is God Just?' This is a relatively new initiative, so the critical use of religious text and theological ideas is not yet fully embedded. The RE leader attends training, enabling new developments to be relayed to the school and the federation. The school's RE provision meets the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The extent to which the new RE leader has gathered a wider evidence base and undertaken evaluation activities to support improvement of RE teaching and learning is developing and she is now more confidently undertaking her leadership role.

Executive Headteacher	Ella Besharati
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