

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ravensworth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ravensworth CE VC Primary School
Ravensworth
Richmond
DL11 7ET

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Leeds
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 December 2017
Name of multi-academy trust / federation [delete as appropriate]	Dales Academies Trust
Date/s of inspection	19 January 2018
Date of last inspection	20 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 121511
Executive Principal	Sharon Stevenson
Inspector's name and number	Geraldine Cooper 696

School context

Ravensworth CE VC Primary School is a smaller than average school with 56 pupils on roll. Pupils are taught in three mixed age classes. The school serves a diverse socio-economic community centred on the village of Ravensworth and including the surrounding rural area and Catterick Garrison. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is below national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is slightly above national average. There have been significant changes since the last inspection. The executive headteacher took up the post in September 2016. Four new members of staff have been appointed. The school works in collaboration with Barton CE School and both schools have now joined the Dales Academy Trust.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ravensworth CE VC Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- All members of the school community have a very clear understanding of the school's Christian values and know that these contribute to pupil attainment because they create an environment in which pupils are nurtured and supported in their learning.
- School leaders have established highly effective systems of regular monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctiveness and capacity to advance pupils' academic and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- The bond between the school and the church is very strong, as a consequence of which pupils, and the wider school community, are supported in their spiritual growth.
- The curriculum and the school environment provide opportunities for pupils' SMSC development which is consistently underpinned by the school's Christian values and ethos.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that pupils are introduced to Bible stories in a structured and consistent manner in order that they develop a deeper understanding of their chronology and relevance to understanding Christian belief.
- Maintain and develop opportunities for teachers to increase their expertise in the application of church school distinctiveness in order to develop their capacity to undertake leadership roles within and beyond the school,

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

The school's Christian values of love, respect, integrity and forgiveness are clearly understood by all members of the school community. They have a high profile and are central to the way in which relationships are exemplified and behaviour is managed. This is recognised by families who have children with varying specific needs, resulting in the fact that the proportion of pupils with identified special needs is slightly above average. Each child is seen as an individual within the school family and is supported and nurtured accordingly. Provision is made through 'Silver Seal' for vulnerable pupils to have regular group time to gain confidence and develop emotional resilience. Participants demonstrate their understanding of the school's Christian values in the way that they talk through their responses to difficult situations in order to build positive relationships. All staff appreciate that there are times when pupils need the opportunity, individually or as a group, to reflect and restore their emotional equilibrium in order to sustain their focus on learning. Circle time and opportunities for individual reflection provide opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding and appreciation of the school's values and the importance of developing a 'can do' attitude. As a consequence of this, pupils benefit from a positive learning environment in which attainment is in line with national averages. In year assessment indicates that pupil progress is improving, particularly for those identified as vulnerable. This is consistently attributed, by all members of the school community, to the impact of the school's Christian vision and values. Parents, particularly those of vulnerable pupils, assert that the Christian ethos within the school not only supports the education and well being of their own children but helps their peers to understand difference and put into practice the values of the school. This is demonstrated in the supportive way that pupils respond to one another, particularly those who find communication difficult.

The executive headteacher has an in depth and far reaching understanding of spiritual development which she shares with teachers so that they create experiences which foster SMSC development. The curriculum is stimulating and provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to share their feelings with a growing appreciation of, and respect for, difference of opinion or belief. Sensitive handling of discussions about contemporary issues has equipped older pupils to articulate the importance of avoiding religious and cultural stereotypes. An imaginative and well led RE curriculum complements the school's Christian ethos and helps pupils to make links between Bible teachings and the school's values, although some pupils find this difficult to articulate. Pupils value the opportunity to learn about other faiths and appreciate that 'everybody is different but we don't treat people differently'. Through the introduction of a link to MOET school in Malawi, and the development of a new RE Curriculum, pupils' understanding of Christianity as a diverse world faith is being addressed but is not yet embedded.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Collective worship has a very high profile within the school. The executive headteacher ensures that long term planning provides a framework through which the school's Christian values are made relevant to pupils and inform relationships. Teachers and clergy lead worship on a regular basis and it is evident, from worship records and regular evaluation, that they use a wide range of strategies to engage pupils. Although Bible stories are an important element in worship, pupils are not developing an understanding of Biblical chronology or the Gospel narrative.

The school's Christian values are clearly expressed through collective worship and it is evident that all pupils are confident to take an active part and demonstrate a genuinely joyful pride in the achievements of others. Older pupils lead Friday worship which is focussed on celebrating the ways in which pupils have demonstrated the school's values in their actions throughout the week. Worship clearly relates to the experiences of each child as an individual and provides an opportunity for all pupils to contribute their own thoughts and responses. Because collective worship is opened with the Grace being said whilst three candles are lit, pupils have an appreciation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Older pupils are confident in expressing their ideas about God and Jesus which they relate particularly to the school values of love and forgiveness. Reflection areas are available in all classrooms and in the school grounds. Pupils talk about how they use these spaces for quiet time and prayer. They appreciate that there are formal and informal opportunities for prayer in which they can approach God for help for themselves or for the people they care about. The open and mutually supportive way in which prayer is encouraged equips pupils to share concerns with their peers and respond in prayer. Pupils describe this as having a positive impact on the choices that they make because they ask 'What does Jesus want me to do?' They also describe their sense of having God with them wherever they are.

Links with the local church are very strong and of mutual benefit. As well as leading collective worship on a regular basis the incumbent, with the support of a dedicated team of parishioners, regularly leads Messy Church in the school. This has provided opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of the Eucharist and has also enhanced pastoral links between church and families. Through events such as Christmas Carols on the village green the school provides a bridge between church and community which is mutually appreciated. The school works closely with the church to ensure that pupils develop an understanding and appreciation of significant Christian festivals. Their Easter worship, expressed through prayer and music, is described by adults as having spiritual depth, 'a real numinous'. The idea that the journey to the church is a pilgrimage, during which they carry their school cross, heightens the pupils' sense of the sacred.

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

The executive headteacher has quickly established a very strong and comprehensive Christian ethos for the school which is shared by the governing body and all school staff. The links between Christian values, ethos and attainment are clearly described and seen as the basis for the development of 'the whole child'. Parents endorse the school's commitment to creating an environment in which SMSC development is seen as integral to academic development. Teaching and support staff share a dedication to an ethos which is driven by 'values not rules' and as a consequence each child is treated as a valued individual. Pupils' support for one another as they develop a 'growth mindset' is already improving the progress that they make. This is evidenced in the externally moderated in year assessment. Detailed data analysis ensures that the progress of all pupils is carefully tracked and that interventions are used effectively. There is a strong focus on creating a nurturing environment in which all pupils, particularly those that are vulnerable, can readily access spiritual, emotional and academic support. The majority of vulnerable pupils are now expected to achieve, alongside their peers, above national expectations.

The executive headteacher has been consistently supported by an experienced and well informed governing body who have a clear understanding of the factors that contribute to the school's distinctiveness as a church school. School leaders have demonstrated the application of the school's Christian values as they have put into place structures and processes that have equipped the school to enter into a secure collaboration with Barton CE School. The governing body maintains a strong commitment to the school's distinctiveness through an SMSC committee which makes regular monitoring visits to the school. Governors share the commitment of the executive headteacher and the staff to ensuring the very highest standards of curriculum opportunity for all pupils. A high priority is given to pupil conferencing with regular feedback to the governing body. This informs the school development plan and SIAMS self-evaluation which provides an accurate reflection of the school's current situation. The views of all stakeholders are regularly monitored and parents consider that they are both well informed and listened to.

The governing body, supported by the executive headteacher, ensured that the collaboration between Ravensworth and Barton CE schools was founded in the context of their distinctive Christian characters and celebrated by the Bishop of Leeds at St Cuthbert with St Mary's Church in Barton. This is commemorated in the collaborative artwork displayed in each school. This has created a sense of unity and opportunity which has enabled both schools to become founding members of the Dales Academies Trust. This was celebrated in an act of worship led by the Bishop of Whitby at Kirby Hill Church. The executive headteacher is already establishing strong and mutually beneficial working relationships within the Trust and this is creating opportunities for the professional development of all staff. The professional development of the subject leader for RE has been made a priority and all staff have the opportunity, through the devolved leadership within the collaboration, to develop subject and leadership skills. School leaders see this as an opportunity to maintain the school's previous experience in encouraging future church school leaders.

SIAMS report January 2018, Ravensworth CE VC School, Ravensworth, DL11 7ET