



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Richmond Church of England VC primary School

Frances Road
Richmond
DL10 4NF

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: North Yorkshire

Dates of inspection: 22 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 1 April 2011

School's unique reference number: 121512

Headteacher: Maxine Price

Inspector's name and number: Geraldine Cooper 696

School context

Richmond Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school and nursery is one of three primary schools serving the market town of Richmond. The school is of average size with 213 pupils on roll and a further 19 in part time nursery places. The majority of pupils are white British. The number of pupils with disability or special educational needs is below average. The number of pupils eligible for pupil premium is average. The school has been in special measures since January 2015 and an executive headteacher has been appointed. There have been major changes in governance and leadership.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Richmond Church of England VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- The inclusion of pupils on the school 'Christian Distinctiveness Group' has ensured that pupils have a strong ownership of the school's Christian vision.
- The extremely positive relationship between the school and the church facilitates a consistent and aspirational Christian vision for the school which enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Collective worship is well planned and imaginatively delivered in a manner which enables pupils to understand the links between Christian teachings and their positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Effective use of data has led the school to improve levels of attainment.

Areas to improve

- Embed a consistent understanding of spirituality in order that opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum can be more readily identified.
- Strengthen the links between Church teachings and Christian values by focussing on fewer core values.
- Widen the involvement of parents in the process of evaluating the school's distinctively Christian character.

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

The school has maintained previous strengths as a distinctively Church school throughout a period of challenge and change. The school community unanimously consider that the school's distinctiveness has contributed significantly to the high levels of staff and pupil morale through this time of potential instability. The school has developed a Christian vision 'Dream, believe, achieve' in conjunction with Church leaders. This has created a greater sense of aspiration amongst the pupils who are keen to learn and to be challenged. Subsequently the attainment of pupils is taking an upward trajectory. The school prides itself on its inclusive policies and practices and works with strategic partners to support challenging pupils. This has led to a reduction in fixed term exclusions and improved attendance. Parents appreciate the care and support given to children with learning or behavioural difficulties and attribute this to the school's Christian character. The school is very conscious of the impact of poor attendance on performance and has developed a range of strategies which have lowered rates of absence because pupils enjoy the wide range of learning activities that they experience. Christian values are central to the way that the school manages behaviour through restorative practice and it is evident from that pupils are developing the capacity to deal effectively with differences whilst being confident in the help that can be provided by adults. An imaginatively planned curriculum, enhanced by a range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a consequence pupils are confident in expressing their own ideas and opinions which link Christian values and wider human values. Spiritual development would be further enhanced through the development of a shared understanding of spirituality which is consistently referenced in curriculum planning. Religious education plays a significant part in pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a range of world faiths. The well planned RE curriculum encourages pupils to question and explore the world's religions and pupils are quick to recognise similarities and differences. Pupils see this as important to their understanding of, and respect for, people whose beliefs are different to their own.

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

Collective worship plays a central role in school life and is planned carefully to ensure that the school's Christian values are understood and relate to pupils' own life experiences. The significance of these values would be enhanced if the school focussed on fewer than the present fifteen. Pupils clearly enjoy collective worship and consider it to be an important part of the school day. They talk about the way that collective worship links to their behaviour and attitudes and encourages their PRIDE (perseverance, resilience, independence, determination and endurance). The school benefits from the strong involvement of the parish church and other churches in the leadership of collective worship. This ensures that pupils are aware of Anglican liturgy and traditions whilst also recognising diversity within Christianity. Collective worship has also enabled pupils to appreciate that there is diversity in the way that Christian festivals are celebrated across the world. Through the Church Distinctiveness Group pupils are able to contribute to the planning and evaluation of collective worship. Their contributions are valued and have led to the creation of more opportunities for prayer. The provision of aids to prayer including a prayer tent and prayer dice enable pupils to pray throughout the day as well as during specific prayer times. Vulnerable pupils are particularly positive about the prayer tent because it provides a calm space for reflection which helps them to cope in difficult situations. Pupils talk confidently about their sense of security because 'Jesus is with me'. Collective worship leaders have used imaginative strategies to develop pupils' understanding of Anglican theology and tradition. As a consequence of this pupils talk about the seasons of the Christian year, God, Jesus and the Holy Trinity with confidence. Older pupils are able to articulate the spiritual experience that has brought about, or enhanced, their personal faith.

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

There has been a significant change in leadership in the school. An executive headteacher has been appointed and there have been changes in the governing body. The church has maintained a strong and supportive relationship with the school throughout these changes. Because of this the school has continued to be a stable and caring environment in which pupils and staff have begun to flourish. The involvement of the incumbent and the wider church community has ensured that the school has consistently maintained its distinctively Christian ethos. The new leadership team has a very clear focus on the significance of the school's distinctive character. They have worked closely with the church to develop a new Christian vision for the school, 'Dream, believe, achieve', which has proved aspirational for pupils. The school's distinctiveness as a church school maintains a high profile through the regular monitoring and evaluation by the 'Church Distinctiveness Group' which reports to the governing body on a regular basis. The prominence given to pupil voice through the inclusion of pupils in the distinctiveness group and also the Junior Leadership Team has developed pupils' awareness of the significance of being a church school. Internal appointments to senior and middle leadership have ensured that Christian distinctiveness has been maintained whilst more rigorous methods of monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress have been introduced. This has led to an acceleration in pupil progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are proud to have been nominated for the Richmond PRIDE award and eager to explain what they have done to achieve this. The award has stimulated pupils' enthusiasm for learning and is one of a number of strategies for improving attendance. There is strong leadership for RE and collective worship and both have a significant impact on pupils' understanding of, and respect for, diversity within, and beyond the community. The relationship between the school and the church is exemplary. The incumbent is a regular visitor into school and provides pastoral support to staff, pupils and their families. The school bridges church and community, enhancing the mission of the church and church members are involved on a daily basis with the school. This provides the link through which the church can offer pastoral support to families, particularly in times of crisis. Through seasonal collective worship in church pupils and their families have gained a sense of ownership of the church which has led to many attending 'Funky Church' on a regular basis. Foundation Governors share a strong understanding of the school's Christian identity with a very committed and knowledgeable governing body. Governors are a regular presence in the school and actively support the new leadership in improving the life chances of all pupils by raising expectations of teaching and learning. The school collaborates with a range of partners including the Swaledale Alliance, the local authority and the diocese, sharing and developing good practice, particularly with regard to Church school distinctiveness. Parents are very supportive of the school, the curriculum and the opportunities that the school provides for pupils to develop social skills and to serve the community. Parents appreciate the open door policy of the school and the regular information provided through the school newsletter. The impact of the school's regular self-evaluation of its distinctively Christian character would be enhanced through greater parental involvement.

SIAMS report June 2016, Richmond Church of England VC Primary School, Richmond, DL10 4NF