

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Allerton Church of England Primary School

Lingfield Approach, Leeds LS17 7HL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Leeds
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local Authority	Leeds
Date of inspection	12 January 2017
Date of last inspection	8 March 2012
Unique reference number	135210
Headteacher	Helen Stott
Inspector's name and number	Malcolm Price 627

School context

Allerton C of E Primary School is a large primary school with 524 children currently on roll, including a nursery and provision for two-year olds. Over the last ten years, the building has been extensively redeveloped due to the rising school population. The site includes a Children's Centre. It is situated within an area of significant deprivation and children's starting points on entry are typically low. The school caters for children from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and language groups. There are strong existing connections with the team ministry of St John's, St Stephen's and St Barnabas' Churches as well as with Moortown Baptist Church. The current headteacher was in post at the time of the previous inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Allerton C of E Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong Christian character and caring ethos of the school are demonstrated through exemplary relationships and a clear focus on distinctive Christian values.
- Collective worship supports this distinctiveness through its strong values-based programme and the wide range and styles of leadership.
- Leadership at all levels is clearly centred on the school's key purpose of providing a nurturing environment based on Christian values. Within this environment all children thrive personally, the majority make good progress academically and the more vulnerable are very well supported.

Areas to improve

- With the help and support of the whole school community, undertake a review of the school's existing mission and vision statements, ensuring that all elements are in child-friendly language.
- Explore ways to develop further spaces within and outside the school building that promote reflection and prayer.

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

Creativity is a hallmark of this school, as shown through imaginative use of spaces like the bespoke art studio and café, and through the innovative use of classroom wall space. When added to the excellent relationships between all members of the school community and the continual drive for improvement, this makes for a school environment where children thrive and enjoy their learning. All this is underpinned by the school's core Christian values which are referred to at every opportunity and which feature prominently around the school and on its website. Parents explain that 'these are universal values...but delivered in a Christian way'. Children are helped in their understanding of these core values by links to their everyday learning and by the high profile given to each value in turn. Helpful information and learning ideas based around each value are sent to parents and made available through the website, and this often has a Bible link. In order to 'give the values a greater Christian context', subject leaders have woven learning about the Fruits of the Spirit into them. The impact of all this can be seen in children's excellent behaviour, their courtesy to each other and their ease in discussing spiritual matters. Through its distinctive character, the school is enabling children to make good progress both personally and academically. From relatively low starting points, progress over time is good for most children and especially for children in vulnerable groups. By the time children leave the school, standards are generally in line with national expectations. School leaders and governors are highly aware of some recent issues relating to performance at end of Key Stage 2 and have taken decisive steps including investing in a number of new programmes. Lessons support the Christian character and encourage children to engage in deeper conversations, as in a Philosophy for Children lesson where they were asked to imagine having wings to fly to Heaven and to think what they would ask God. Children's work in Religious Education (RE) is values-based and they are able to explain the connections between their RE and values work. For instance, they understand that the dove is symbol of peace and that hope is connected with the story of Pandora's Box. They can explain that 'joy is a deeper feeling than happiness'. All classrooms have reflective areas with displays relating to the values and to recent RE learning. These areas often include examples of children's prayers. Children are confident in explaining artefacts in these areas, such as the Jewish Menorah. Bibles are available in classrooms, often in the reflective areas, and children say that 'you can pick them up and it makes you feel a bit lighter'. The school council are currently discussing the development of the existing outdoor Quiet Garden. Other than this and the classroom reflective areas, there are limited places within the building that encourage children to pause and reflect although, from a physical perspective, there is scope to develop this. Children are happy to discuss why they find some things to be 'spiritual and awe-inspiring'. In some classrooms, children are able to post compliments about each other linked to the values framework. A similar system is also used in the staffroom for colleagues to encourage each other. Prayer is a significant feature for children within the school day, for example when leading lunchtime prayers. There is also a staff prayer group and prayer box, as well as a newly formed parent prayer group. These are perfect examples of how the school values all members of its community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship takes a wide range of formats, from special services in school and in local churches to more informal opportunities to discuss and learn from the school values. It also includes whole school, key stage and class assemblies with some worship being highly interactive and some more meditative. Children say that there is always a time for reflection or prayer and that these daily gatherings are based around the school's distinctive Christian values. Collective worship is led by a range of staff and visitors, sometimes in teams, and children say they enjoy the regular weekly visits of clergy and members from a number of local churches, including both Anglican and other denominations. Children remember the themes of worship, especially when they are linked to Bible stories. In this way, they are able to connect what they learn about in collective worship to the core values and can express how it affects their own attitudes. For instance, they can explain that the parable of the ten lepers is about thankfulness and that 'people take things for granted but you have to be thankful and grateful'. They can also suggest that the parable of the Good Samaritan is about kindness because 'the Samaritan was against the injured person but still helped him'. Some children have a more developed understanding and are able to link the core values to similar ideas in other faiths, for instance in explaining that 'the Quran says we have to be kind to others'. Children regularly participate by starting the worship, reading prayers and acting out stories, as when Key Stage 1 children acted out a meal to demonstrate the theme of thankfulness. They say that 'everyone gets a chance to be involved'. Children and adults alike are encouraged to share ideas within the context of collective worship, for example when working in groups to discuss the rights of the child and to complete a large scale jigsaw on this theme. Children have a greater leadership role for class assemblies, which are popular with parents. They are introduced to Anglican traditions, such as the colours of the church year, and to more difficult concepts such as the nature of the Trinity. They can explain that when a candle is lit 'it represents Jesus as the light of the world'. Links with local churches are mutually supportive. For instance, children use flags from church and visit all the local churches for festivals, special services

and for learning about Christianity. They appreciate visitors from other faith backgrounds, such as when learning about Eid. Collective worship is planned in detail to support and enhance the values framework, to make links with Biblical teaching and also to connect with British values. The school's multi-faith group and clergy are involved in the planning process. Teachers talk to children about what they like about worship and their views are also gathered through the school council. A range of school leaders, including governors and clergy, contribute to monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship. One of the main ways they do this is by encouraging children to share their views in both formal and informal ways. For example, children use post-its to suggest their favourite worship songs and this informs planning. In fact, parents say that children go home singing worship songs they have learnt at school. To this extent the focus areas from the previous inspection have been acted on. The school meets statutory requirements for collective worship.

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

All leaders, through their uncompromising commitment to the school's vision and values, through their determination to raise and maintain standards, and through the way they allow creativity to flourish, are helping children to gain the greatest benefit from the school and its distinctive character. It is not a surprise, therefore, that governors say that 'children leave the school well-rounded'. Governors also recognise the high level of nurture that leaders offer to children, for instance when explaining how leaders' pastoral care for children is shown when supporting those finding tests challenging. School leaders, governors and parents have met to discuss the school's core values and how they connect with British values and with the emphasis on Fruits of the Spirit. This collaboration includes parents from different faith backgrounds. Although the core values are embedded within every day school life and in the curriculum, leaders are right in believing that, as the school approaches its tenth anniversary, this is a suitable time to review its mission and vision statements. Links with local church leaders are strong and relational. Clergy work hand in hand with school leaders to embed and develop the values. They support staff as well as children and happily speak to children about how being a Christian influences their leadership style. Leaders enable children to learn about a range of faiths and give them confidence to engage with sometimes difficult matters. Children can confidently discuss the issues of the Western Wall for Jews and show a growing global awareness in understanding troubled regions such as Syria. They speak of the significance of the gurus in Sikhism, and how Mecca is a special place for Muslims. Leaders help children to learn about those from different backgrounds, for instance through a pen pal link with a rural village school and through activities during Black history month. Children are encouraged in their own leadership. The school council meets regularly and has its minutes published on the website. The council is allowed to make its own decisions about the use of funds raised and school captains have recommended charities to support such as Water Aid, Fairtrade, and a linked school in Kenya. Each year, Year 4 children take part in the Archbishop of York's Youth Trust Young Leaders Award. This is helping children learn about compassion and how to express it and has resulted in children raising funds for a cancer charity by making a film, doing unannounced litter collections, and supporting Médecins sans Frontières and St Gemma's Hospice. Leaders have provided a very wide range of extra-curricular and out-of-school activities, including the popular Take Over days where children have the opportunity to step into different adult roles, for example at a local supermarket. All these activities are helping to develop children's understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) matters. They are helping children to have a wider perspective on the world around them at the same time as appreciating the school community that they share. In the words of one pupil, when showing a thought-provoking outdoor jigsaw design, 'without each person in the school, the jigsaw is not complete'.

SIAMS report January 2017 Allerton C of E Primary School, Leeds LS17 7HL