

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

### Tatham Fells Church of England Primary School

Lowgill, Lancaster, Lancashire LA2 8RA	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Blackburn</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Lancashire
Date of inspection	26 April 2018
Date of last inspection	February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 119379
Headteacher	Fiona Ip
Inspector's name and number	Susan Cliffe 832

#### School context

Tatham Fells Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average rural primary school. The school has two mixed age classes. The vast majority of children are from White British backgrounds. The number of children from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs is below the national average. The school lies in the parish of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Tatham Fells. The headteacher has been appointed since the last denominational and Ofsted inspections. She is executive headteacher over Tatham Fells and another school with which they are collaborated.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Tatham Fells Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding and enthusiastic Christian leadership of the school, which is rooted in the Christian values, makes a positive impact on the wellbeing of all within the school community.
- The pupils show exemplary behaviour which demonstrates the embedded Christian values of love, forgiveness, respect, justice and hope.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision is outstanding and is underpinned by the school's Christian character and is inspired by the mission statement.
- The partnerships with the local community, especially the parish, are strong and mutually supportive.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop more community links outside the local area to develop further the pupils' understanding of other cultures, faiths and Christianity as a world faith.
- Increase the involvement of pupils in the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship

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

The Christian character of the school is captured in the school's new mission statement, 'Roots to grow, wings to fly and faith to flourish'. A parent commented that the statement is owned and loved by the school community. This mission statement, along with the Christian values embraced by the school, provides the foundations for the strong relationships enjoyed. A teacher shared, 'This school is a very special place to work because the Christian ethos is so strong. Everyone is there for you if life is ever difficult.' All members of the school community talk about the high profile Christian values of the school, such as love and forgiveness, with confidence and a strong sense of ownership. The values and the mission statement are visible all around the school reflecting their importance within school life. The spirituality of the pupils and staff is nurtured through prayer and worship. Parents believe that behaviour is excellent and is that this is driven by the biblically based Christian values. School leaders deal swiftly with any suggestion of bullying, and pupils feel safe and secure in this caring school.

The Christian school family values the whole child and the pupils, in turn, are extremely positive about their school. This leads to high levels of attendance. A Year 5 boy shared, 'We are so lucky to come to this school. If anyone needs us, we all run to help.' Current progress at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with other schools nationally for reading and writing and below for mathematics. The school leaders see it as their Christian duty to ensure that pupils flourish, for example through personalised learning programmes in mathematics.

The strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the pupils is strongly supported by the Christian character of the school and the provision of religious education (RE). They enjoy and feel challenged by RE lessons which underpin the Christian distinctiveness of the school. A Year 4 pupil enthused, 'RE affects how we behave and it makes me think. For example, I had to reflect about how Peter must have felt when he betrayed Jesus.' The mixed age classes are taught well in RE and the children enjoy being with their friends, irrespective of their age. Pupils are respectful of cultures and beliefs other than their own. This is nurtured through RE, the global development programme and, for instance, a topic exploring China. Pupils can speak about many other faiths with knowledge and curiosity. A Year 3 pupil explained, 'I love learning about other religions and I always want to know more.' Pupils have a growing awareness of Christianity as a multicultural world faith through the study of Christmas celebrations in Brazil, the Philippines and Russia. A Year 5 child commented, 'Christianity is found everywhere in the world but in some countries more than others.' The school is intent on embedding this understanding further through developing links with Christian schools nationally and overseas. As an expression of the school's Christian foundation, many charities are supported such as toilet twinning and the shoe box and air ambulance appeals. A variety of extra-curricular activities enhance and enrich the provision especially through 'Open the Book' which focuses on the exploration of Bible stories.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is a core part of the life of the school and it is valued greatly by the whole school community. A Year 6 child stated, 'I like the chance to think about God, reflect and be calm.' There is a weekly theme which strengthens the positive and caring attitudes found within the school community and the shared Christian values. Worship is firmly rooted in Bible teachings, Christian values, the Church's year and Anglican traditions. As a result, pupils experience distinctively Christian worship. Clergy and staff are involved in the delivery of worship and the pupils particularly enjoy the visits from the vicar who makes the worship, as one pupil explained, 'great fun'. The pupils have become more involved in delivering worship and are keen to develop this contribution further. They particularly enjoy being involved in church services such as those held at Christmas, on Mothering Sunday and at harvest.

Planning of worship is thorough and is an area in which pupils are beginning to grow in confidence. Groups of pupils, such as the school council, now plan and deliver worship. The school is focused on increasing the role of pupils in planning and delivering worship to develop to deepen their spiritual experience and understanding. Also, the school recognises that evaluation of worship within the school is a focus for development. The children are keen to contribute to this monitoring and have already begun to do this for major events such as the Remembrance service. Increasingly, visitors such as the youth worker from a local Methodist church are involved in leading worship. This takes place in school, church and in the outside environment. As a consequence, pupils are fully involved and enjoy the variety of provision. Singing is joyful and behaviour and engagement are excellent. Areas inside and outside school, such as classroom spirituality areas and the reflection garden, promote spirituality. However, the school has identified that these experiences could be further enhanced with the involvement of pupils in planning future provision for reflection. The prayer tree in the hall and 'teaspoon' prayers have allowed pupils to value personal prayer. Pupils contribute sensitively to prayer during worship through, for example, a prayer book written by them focusing on God's world. Prayerfulness is nurtured throughout the day allowing pupils to see this as an important facet of school life. Pupils, as a result, are developing the confidence to pray spontaneously. Pupils have a growing

understanding of the Trinity as being Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are able to relate the Trinity to 'all being part of one God' and can relate the concept to certain prayers and hymns.

The school community is welcomed to participate in the worshipful life of the school and church family. Parents, parishioners and governors attend regularly and this adds to the pupils' sense of belonging to this loving community. A parent shared, 'My toddler and I are always made welcome to worship. We feel like we fit here.' The pupils are inspired to perform acts of charity through the worship themes and exploration of Christian values. A pupil commented, 'Worship helps us to improve our lives and the lives of others. We know how lucky we are.' As a result, the school community has generously supported many causes such as a local food bank and the Fair Trade coffee morning.

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

The recently appointed headteacher has vigorously promoted the vision of the school, 'to provide a high quality education inspired by Christian values'. The school leaders, including governors, have given wholehearted and effective support. This reflects the success the school has had in addressing the areas for development from the last denominational inspection. The vision for the school is strengthened through the effective work of the governors' reflection and effectiveness committee. The strong SMSC development and wellbeing of the pupils is underpinned by this Christian vision. A teacher shared, 'The Christian values and mission statement are part of our daily life and they make the children so caring.' All members of the school community are able to share the positive impact which these values have on school life. A parent shared, 'The values are referred to at school and home. They are so important.' Parents are highly appreciative of school and its relationship with the local community and they feel their opinion counts. For example, some parents suggested the establishment of a playgroup in school. A successful group has been created by the school through mutual co-operation between parents and school leaders.

The school has systems for self-evaluation which lead to school improvement and effective learning. This was an area for improvement in the last denominational inspection and the school is committed to making these increasingly robust. The curriculum of the school is permeated by the Christian vision which enriches the learning experience of the pupils. Pupils are given a voice through the school council and they feel that their school is precious within the local community. A Year 6 child commented, 'We feel that our school is at the centre of village life.' The school leaders share that they have strong links with the school with which they are collaborated. They enjoy sharing lessons, trips and team teaching with them.

The school also enjoys a strong relationship with the parish church and the local Methodist church. The vicar commented, 'There is strong team-work between church and school. It is a pleasure and delight to be involved with this school.' The parish is committed to supporting the school and strengthening the partnership through such provision as the 'Loaves and Fishes' sessions. These are held once a term and involve the pupils in Bible based activities with parishioners. The sessions lead to a strong sense of community and a deeper understanding of the Bible. The school has taken steps to develop the pupils' understanding of the wider world nationally and globally. Consequently, there are visits to various places of worship such as Blackburn Cathedral, a mosque and visitors such as a practising Hindu are welcomed. The study of world faiths, the support of global charities and the involvement in the 'global development programme' add to the pupils' appreciation of other cultures. However, the school is continuing to focus on developing more partnerships to deepen this understanding further. Worship and RE are major priorities for school as shown in their inclusion in school improvement planning. These areas meet statutory requirements and are well supported and resourced by school leaders. There is a good relationship between school and diocese. They have supported the headteacher in her new leadership role and staff and governors attend training and briefings. Effective training is given to staff and governors to ensure that future leaders are nurtured. The links with the local cluster of schools also makes a great contribution to staff development. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is excellent.

SIAMS report, April 2018, Tatham Fells Church of England Primary School, LA2 8RA