

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Blyton cum Laughton Church of England Primary School

High Street
Blyton
Lincolnshire
DN21 3JX

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Diocese

Lincoln

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Lincolnshire

Date of inspection

26 June 2017

Date of last inspection

18 April 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

1260619

Headteacher

Karl Duke

Inspector's name and number

Patricia Ruff 537

School context

Blyton cum Laughton is a smaller than average voluntary aided primary school located on two sites in neighbouring villages close to the town of Gainsborough. Children in reception and key stage 1 are taught at the Laughton site and children in key stage 2 at the Blyton site. The majority of pupils are from British White backgrounds. Since the last inspection the percentage of children with special educational needs has risen and is now significantly higher than the national figure with an increasing number of children coming from beyond the catchment area. The headteacher has been in post since September 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Blyton cum Laughton as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher, fully supported by governors, has re-affirmed the Christian ethos to re-establish a harmonious school community in which all pupils and adults feel valued.
- Focused leadership, at all levels including governors, ensures the Christian character of the school is central to its mission.
- The quality of the relationships between adults and pupils is strong enabling all children to feel well supported and understood.
- A focus on spiritual development has significantly contributed to the personal **spiritually** of pupils of all ages.

Areas to improve

- Fully embed pupil engagement in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship to empower pupils to lead worship themselves and build on the effective work of the Collective Worship Council.
- Raise standards in religious education (RE) across the school by using assessment to plan learning which challenges pupils thinking and deepens understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- Develop pupil's cultural awareness so they better understand diversity beyond their own community.

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

The distinctive Christian character of the school is well established and has at its heart the achievement and well-being of all pupils. The mission statement, 'Happy, Caring, Achieving – Caring for our school – Caring for each other,' drives the strategic direction of the school. Governors have a clear understanding of their role and with the strong support of the incumbent significantly enhance the school as a Christian community. As a result this inclusive school provides a safe and secure haven for all pupils to flourish with the wellbeing of everyone a high priority. There is a clear focus on pupil achievement with staff knowing individuals well. The recent appointment of a learning mentor has further enhanced the supportive role of adults enabling all pupils to access the curriculum and be supported emotionally. Across the two sites, Christian values and ethos underpin pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In particular a focus on spiritual development has enabled pupils to deepen their understanding of personal spirituality. Pupils of all ages are open to expressing their thoughts, feelings and opinions sharing a range of examples to demonstrate this. Outdoor and indoor spaces provide places to reflect on issues including world events such as 9/11 with reflections displayed in key areas around the school. This supports the pupils growing awareness of diversity and difference and a deeper understanding of how they can actively learn about and support charitable causes on a local, national and global level. Relationships across the school are harmonious and respectful and this is reflected in how adults and children work together. Younger pupils talk about their transition to the junior site and how they settle with older pupils helping them become familiar with their new surroundings. They have a good awareness of each other's needs with older pupils nurturing and guiding younger ones. Pupils of all ages explain how Christian values help them get along with each other and resolve any differences with some citing examples from Bible stories. Pupils were particularly proud to be recipients of the Shining Light Award for demonstrating how they lived out the Christian values and parents appreciated the opportunity to join in with these celebrations. Parents commented on the significance of the Christian values and ethos when choosing the school stating how well the school developed the whole child. They talk positively of the impact of the headteacher making them feel very much part of the school through open communication empowering them to have a voice and be partners in their children's education. These positive relationships have contributed to the improvement of attendance for all groups of pupils. Parents welcome the weekly newsletter and enjoy the opportunity to debate The Big Question, for example- How do you feel when things change? How can we make change easier? Or What does it mean to be democratic? Can you think of any Biblical stories which share examples of democracy in action? Throughout the school the Christian character is made explicit through focal points with Christian signs and symbols, reflection areas, prayer trees and displays including an ornamental tree for parents to contribute comments, as a result there is a shared understanding of the ethos of the school. Religious Education (RE) and collective worship have a high priority across the school thus strengthening the Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is valued by all members of the school community. Strong leadership from the headteacher has enabled the community to review the place and meaning of worship as a central part of the day. The understanding of Anglican traditions and practice has been deepened through a whole school approach which includes the introduction of liturgy. As a result of governor monitoring the RE governor/incumbent is supporting the school in using the liturgical calendar as a means of exploring Christian values. Worship leaders have made explicit links between biblical teaching and Christian values to enable adults and pupils to make connections between values and how they live them out in their daily lives. Consequently relationships have been strengthened and behaviour is good. Worship provides opportunities, for example through talk partners, for all participants to reflect and respond. The lighting of a candle, defined areas and displays help focus pupils. The newly formed collective worship council are excellent role models. They have worked with the Forestry Commission gathering branches to create prayer trees for each classroom. Pupils of all ages understand prayer as a way of talking to God through giving thanks and asking for help. Opportunities for reflection, through dedicated areas, have encouraged pupils to respond to local, national and global events such as recent attacks in Manchester and London. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to record their thoughts and feelings and engage in reflection activities which have been attractively set out in a child friendly way. Worship in both school and church provides opportunities to understand and celebrate festivals in the church year. Pupils explain Pentecost and the Fruits of the Spirit well demonstrating a growing understanding of Jesus Christ and the Christian understanding of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The well planned framework for worship provides a good foundation to encourage a wider range of worship leaders to contribute over the year including consolidating regular opportunities for pupils to plan and lead. Development of monitoring and evaluation will further impact on the quality of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education significantly contributes to the Christian character of the school and is exceptionally well led by the assistant headteacher as subject leader. She has a sharply focused development plan which is clearly communicated and sets out monitoring and evaluation activities undertaken with leaders including the foundation governor responsible for RE and collective worship as well as supported learning walks with governors. This is impacting on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Her own classroom practice is outstanding with all pupils engaged in enquiry, interpretation and reflection. Reflection areas in classrooms and around the school are well used to extend pupils thinking and understanding. Y6 used iPads to make photographic images of the natural environment as they reflected on Creation and posed big questions for God such as, 'Why is the sky blue?' All had the opportunity to respond as God to a range of questions for example, 'It's blue because it is calming like a blanket that wraps round you.' Christianity features strongly in RE enabling pupils to make connections between Bible stories they have heard, Christian values and concepts. Theological understanding is supported by the incumbent. Pupils in year 6 explain the Bible narrative and the meaning of incarnation and salvation. With the aid of a 'fidget spinner' younger pupils articulated their understanding of the Trinity effectively. Around the school, pupils proudly share examples of creative RE work including high quality extended writing. Religious education is evident across the school through display. The very youngest children reflected on the recent tower block inferno using powerful images to identify how residents were helped and tackled questions such as 'Should you help people who do bad things?' Parents particularly commented on how they enjoyed talking to their children about faith and belief noting how confident children were to debate issues at home. Opportunities for families to respond together to ideas such as creation have been introduced and the level of participation is increasing. Recent subject leader training and the attendance at Diocesan cluster meetings has provided a clear sense of direction in developing the RE curriculum in terms of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource and assessment for RE.

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

The new headteacher, challenged by governors, has galvanised the school into a harmonious, committed team with a shared vision for improvement. He has built open and trustful relationships with the governors, together re-defining the strategic direction of the school and rapidly ensuring the Christian character of the school is explicit. Governors are confident to challenge the headteacher and hold him to account. Together, they recognise this is an exciting time for the school and that there is even more they can do to develop all aspects of the Christian ethos. To this end, although the overall outcome for this inspection is good, many aspects of church school distinctiveness are outstanding and there is clear capacity to continue to improve collective worship and religious education (RE) to meet the raised expectations of the current inspection framework. The headteacher, well supported by the assistant head teacher, has modelled effective leadership to build this capacity to improve across the teaching team. The assistant headteacher demonstrates this through her strong and effective leadership of RE and collect worship. Focused training from the Diocese and the work of a consultant has informed clear and concise improvement plans resulting in well-paced development with governors holding the school to account. Pupils across the school are achieving well and are accepting of each other. They confidently share their views and opinions and are proud of their school. In particular the Collective Worship Council are articulate ambassadors for the school maturely sharing the improvements they have led this year. All members of the school community, including parents, feel they have a voice and are listened to and this is re-establishing confidence and mutually supportive relationships. The Christian ethos nurtures all children and empowers them to ask big questions to tackle 'hard things' that are going on in the world today. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. The development areas from the previous inspection have been addressed although pupil's engagement in planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship is recognised as needing further development.

SIAMS report June 2017 Blyton cum Laughton Church of England Primary School Blyton Lincolnshire DN21 3JX