

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sherburn Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

St Hilda's Street, Sherburn, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 8PG

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	York
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Name of federation	Wolds and Vale Federation
Date of inspection	08 February 2018
Date of last inspection	03 May 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 121539
Executive Headteacher	Ian Taylor
Inspector's name and number	Lucy Jordan 910

School context

Sherburn CE Primary school is a very small school serving a rural village. It is part of a federation of two schools established in 2016. The newly appointed Executive headteacher spends half the week at each school. Almost all pupils are white British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than average and almost half the children on roll are eligible for pupil premium funding, much higher than average. The number of pupils starting and leaving outside the usual times is high.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sherburn CE VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Leaders have a clear vision, 'Working together, putting children first within our Christian family', underpinned by the Christian values of friendship, forgiveness and truthfulness which inform all decisions made. These values have sustained the school during the past year when there have been four changes of headship.
- Relationships at all levels are a key strength because staff live out the school's Christian values and teach these in a way which is meaningful to children. Pupils and their families are well known by staff and whenever a new pupil or member of staff joins the school, they are warmly welcomed into Sherburn's 'Christian Family'.
- Christian distinctiveness is central to school life at Sherburn, enabling pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to achieve and their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development to flourish.

Areas to improve

- Develop ways to embed the school's Christian values so that they permeate all aspects of school life and their impact on the lives and achievements of the pupils can be explicitly articulated by all members of the school community.
- Develop children's understanding and respect for diversity in other faith communities as well of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- Involve children more in planning and evaluating collective worship so that it is more responsive to their needs, consistently raises aspirations and challenges pupils to take responsibility for their own charitable social actions both in school and the wider community.
- Continue to develop the leadership at Sherburn so that both established partnerships and new ones flourish, bringing substantial and mutual benefits for all groups.

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

The head teacher, governors and staff, are committed to ensure the Christian character of the school meets the need of all learners. The school is currently focusing on target setting in order to raise expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve. Regardless of their different abilities or backgrounds, all pupils usually make good progress because they are nurtured as members of the school's 'Christian family' and staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work together to ensure pupils thrive personally and academically. Through discussing Bible stories that exemplify the Christian values of friendship and hope, for example the story of Jesus calming the storm, children's self-belief grows and aspirations are raised. Pupils learn to be true to themselves and do the best they can.

Relationships at all levels are a strength at Sherburn. The school provides a very happy and stable learning environment and operates as a Christian family with everyone working together. Children loved working with the school business manager in worship to piece together a wooden cross, for example. Parents say that the school 'brings the village together', especially in collective worship and this impacts positively on their children's well-being. With a higher than average number of children arriving at the school, the exceptionally warm welcome as one enters the school is especially important. Children joining the school after the usual time comment on how they quickly made new friends. Parents particularly value the school's 'open door' policy, confident that a member of staff will listen to them and deal with their concerns effectively. There is mutual respect between staff and pupils, promoted through the school's Golden Rules which themselves link to the school's Christian values, for example children know that the first two rules relate to friendship and talk about how Jesus was a friend to a sick child and 'built that little girl's blocks up'. Another child said 'It helped me learn that Jesus is always there to make you feel better.'

There are various opportunities for pupils to develop spirituality outside religious education (RE) and collective worship, for example through engaging with eye-catching reflection corners and interactive displays which invite one to pick up a pebble and reflect or say a prayer. Children enjoy participating in these activities and appreciate the opportunity to sit quietly in the spiritual garden when the weather permits. Thoughtful prayers, written by children in their own time are posted in classrooms and the hall. All members of the school community recognise the school's distinctively Christian values which are displayed in various places around the school building and staff have developed these, for example by having a friendship tree in the breakfast club which helped nurture friendships between pupils who wouldn't ordinarily play together. Playtimes are very friendly at Sherburn with children of all ages playing well together and older children providing excellent role models for younger children by living out the Christian values of friendship and forgiveness. When children bump into each other, they apologise and ask, 'Are you alright? They have a good understanding of right and wrong and can link this to Old Testament stories such as Noah's Ark and Jacob and Esau. Any rare incidents of anti-social behaviour are dealt with swiftly and compassionately. Visits to a mosque and York Minster support children's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and of other faiths, ensuring the relative isolation of the village is not a barrier to developing children's respect of those from diverse communities. In the light of this, the Christian character of the school is effective in supporting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at Sherburn.

Whilst recognising that various policies and practices can be shared across the Wolds and Vale Federation which has been established since the last inspection, leaders are emphatic that the Christian distinctiveness of Sherburn is protected and continues to flourish. The school's Christian character, in particular 'putting children first', informs the school's robust yet proportionate approach to attendance. The reduction of unauthorised absence is a priority for the new head teacher as attendance is below national levels. Children enjoy RE because it is taught well and they recognise that it helps them learn about other faiths as well as Christianity. The recent introduction of Understanding Christianity materials to support the locally agreed syllabus is helping to ensure RE contributes positively to the Christian character of the school. In RE, children have opportunities to work both collaboratively and individually in personal reflection which contributes in a positive way to their social and spiritual development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is valued by everyone at Sherburn. Children speak with enthusiasm about Monday worship, relishing the opportunity to participate in enacting Bible stories, such as Jonah and the Whale. They value 'having a quiet time' and perceive that worship 'makes you stronger because God loves everyone'. Worship in the school's spiritual garden is especially memorable for children. Parents value the opportunity to join their children in a weekly celebration assembly saying, 'it gives a sense of community' and see particular value in gathering together as part of the school community in the church, too. Worship is inclusive. Evidence of the impact of worship on all groups within school is not yet formally gathered but positive relationships at all levels and attitudes to school life

and learning by pupils may be attributed in part to collective worship. Children say worship 'shows you how to be a better person' and in lessons children work very well together in groups when their teacher says, 'I really need you guys to support each other'. Some monitoring by staff and governors has ensured the key elements of worship, such as it being based on Christian values have been maintained during the period of interim headship. Evaluation does not always have a clear purpose and is undertaken by a limited range of people so that an accurate picture of the impact of collective worship on the life of the whole school community is not fully known.

Leaders try to ensure the relevance of collective worship to the lives of the children in school through adapting published materials. Children and clergy are not currently involved in planning collective worship on a regular basis but are keen to be. Collective worship supports the school's core Christian values and contributes to learners' moral and spiritual development, for example, through considering a Christian perspective of hope. Children act in the service of others by participating in charity fundraising events although the link between this and the Christian idea of service of others is not made.

The purpose of prayer is understood by children who write their own prayers linked to current themes and post them in a prayer box to be read at collective worship. Some pupils make use of prayer beyond school. Attractive reflection areas within each classroom are used by pupils and the spiritual garden is highly valued. Biblical material has a prominent place in worship and children can make connections with these, the school's core values and their own lives, for example understanding the importance of truthfulness through the story of Jacob and Esau. They recognise the importance of the person of Jesus Christ in collective worship and link key events in his life to the school's Christian values such as the last supper to friendship. Children at Sherburn enjoy hearing Bible stories in worship but really enjoy playing characters from them!

Children recognise key Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter, relating these to the life of Jesus. They understand why there is a cross on the worship table and that the candle represents God's presence and hope. Attendance at St Hilda's Church and the Methodist chapel help learners recognise local Anglican and Methodist practice, but they are not yet able to identify what is distinctive about different Christian traditions in worship. Pupils talk of the Trinity as like the skin, pulp and core of an apple and in this way have a basic awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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

The leadership team articulates and promotes a distinctively Christian vision based on the school's chosen Christian values of friendship, truthfulness and forgiveness. Leaders recognise that the children's achievement and progress varies from year to year, depending on the cohort characteristics of this very small school. Ensuring that every child's needs are met as a unique individual has informed key actions such as aspirational target setting for each child. Governors have a good understanding of the Christian distinctiveness of the school and this informs key decisions such as the appointment of the new headteacher, formalising the Wolds and Vale Federation and collaborative arrangements with the pre-school. The new strapline 'Working Together, Putting Children First within our Christian Family' encapsulates the approach taken by leaders at all levels to improve outcomes for pupils. Leaders' self-evaluation is accurate and informs the school's improvement planning. In a short period of time, the new leadership team has already identified and implemented some key development priorities, for example a new behaviour policy, informed by the Christian values of friendship, truthfulness and forgiveness, which has led to the development of Golden Rules and has improved Christian distinctiveness. Children now link some, but not yet all of the Golden rules to Christian values and to stories from the Bible.

Leaders have a good understanding of the need to ensure that collective worship, RE and the wider curriculum are informed by the school's Christian values and that these values need to be made explicit in such a way that they respond to the particular needs of the pupils at Sherburn, a high proportion of whom have encountered significant changes in their lives. Leaders have supported pupils to see the Christian value of truthfulness as more than simply telling the truth but being true to oneself and having a good attitude to their work so that they achieve what God knows they are capable of. Training of the RE leader in the use of Understanding Christianity materials is bringing about improvements to the quality of RE work. The headteacher has taken the lead on collective worship and has made improvements such as the lighting of a candle to mark the start of worship and adaptations to existing planning to better meet the needs of children.