



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Oxenhope Church of England Primary School

Cross Lane

Oxenhope

Keighley

BD22 9LH

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: Wakefield

Dates of inspection: 12 February 2016

Date of last inspection: July 2011

School's unique reference number: 107349

Headteacher: Kathrine Nutting

Inspector's name and number: Lynne Gillions 662

School context

Oxenhope Church of England Primary School has 203 pupils on roll mainly of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium is below the national average. Since the last inspection, the school has had significant changes in staffing including a new headteacher and senior leadership team.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Oxenhope Church of England Primary School are outstanding

- The headteacher's Christian vision for the school is supported by all leaders and the local church and as a result children flourish as individuals and most pupils make good progress.
- Christian values such as wisdom, peace, compassion and forgiveness underpin all aspects of school life and this results in strong, supportive relationships, children who are nurtured well, who feel secure and who are enthusiastic about their learning.
- Children show excellent enquiry skills and can express their ideas and opinions confidently. They respect the views of others, they take on responsibilities and are taught skills that enhance their learning capacity and help to equip them for life.
- The systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance as a church school feeds into the School Development Plan and leads to ongoing improvement.

Areas to improve

- Widen children's understanding of global communities and of other expressions of Christianity to enrich their perceptions of other societies.
- Embed more opportunities for children to take on responsibility for planning and delivering collective worship.
- Equip staff with relevant leadership skills in order to distribute roles and responsibilities for church school effectiveness more broadly.

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

Christian values are explicit and recognised by all stakeholders. They are central to the school's character. Specific values have been identified: wisdom, compassion, peace, service, justice and forgiveness. Children can talk about the impact they have in their lives. 'Wisdom has helped me make some wise choices at home.' 'Compassion taught me that I should think before I speak so that I don't hurt someone.' Values are shared with parents on newsletters and one parent commented, 'there is a definite emphasis on them, they define the school'. Most children make good progress in school and attainment is generally good. A dip at Key Stage 2 in 2015 is being addressed with a rigorous action plan and pupils are on course for improved results this year. In their quest to secure improvement the school recognises that its Christian ethos is an important contributor to its success. There is a strong emphasis on enquiry-based learning which supports children in becoming independent thinkers who are enthusiastic about their learning. Children from Reception to Year 6 show a real capacity to express themselves. Their enquiry and reflection skills are often outstanding. They show a high level of maturity in discussions about faith and are very courteous towards others whose views differ from their own. The care and nurture of children is exemplary as shown in the appointment of a chaplain with pastoral responsibilities and the establishment of The Nest where vulnerable children and families are given support. This is seen as Christian values in action, helping to remove barriers to learning and encourage attendance so that all children can access their education. Relationships in school are supportive and strong and behaviour is of a high standard. Christian values play an important part in encouraging good behaviour and are central to dealing with any issues that arise in a spirit of forgiveness and restoration. Parents recognise that the staff always seek to provide a positive solution should problems occur. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children is strong and there are opportunities for children to develop life skills, for example through the Lifesavers pilot project in Year 5 where children are learning the importance of saving and budgeting. Pupils can also take on responsibilities by becoming buddies, peace partners or members of the school council. Children enjoy learning about other faiths and cultures and are very respectful of faiths and beliefs different to their own. Their understanding of Christianity as expressed in other parts of the world is limited and although they are involved in a range of cultural activities and charitable events, they would benefit from more exposure to positive images of countries such as Africa in order to challenge stereotypical viewpoints.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a very important element of school life. It is well planned and based around Christian values, festivals, Bible stories and other pertinent material. Each half term there is a focus on a specific Christian value. Before it is introduced to the children, staff discuss the theological basis for that particular value in a staff meeting. It is then explored through collective worship and weekly reflection times with the children. Each value is linked to a specific event such as Harvest or the Shoebox Appeal. Children enjoy collective worship and behave appropriately during worship times. They are particularly good at singing. They have opportunities to read and write prayers and participate in drama and readings. They also sometimes take responsibility for planning and leading reflection times and some collective worship. There is scope for the recently formed worship group to plan and deliver more pupil-led worship. Children can talk about Bible stories and link them to their own lives, to seasons of the church year and to Anglican practice. For example, children know that the current church season is Lent and they link this to the 40 days and nights that Jesus was in the desert where he was tempted. They know that people often give things up during Lent and this helps them to identify with the experience of Jesus. They know that the purple altar clothes in school and church signify the season of Lent. Children relate what they learn during worship to their own lives. Following a focus on peace, one child said, 'When I was upset

about something, I knew I needed to become peaceful on the inside.’ The impact of collective worship can be seen in older children’s support of younger ones and in the fund-raising activities for local and national charities. Children show a good understanding of the Christian view of God describing the Father as the one who loves us, Jesus as the one who died for us and the Holy Spirit as the one who lives in us. Collective worship sometimes takes different forms such as the Reception nativity which involves all the children, their parents and sometimes animals starting at the school gate and journeying together through the school grounds until they reach the stable, symbolically making their own journey through the Christmas story. Prayer is an important element of worship and reflection times and children recognise its value to people of faith. They have opportunities to write and read prayers and pray spontaneously during reflection times if they wish. They see it as ‘a way to speak to God’ and recognise that you can pray at anytime. Equally, some children choose not to pray as they do not believe in God and they know that their views will be respected. Children said that they sometimes chose to go into the reflection areas in class or in the external peace pod to reflect or pray. The small tent in one classroom was particularly valued as an enclosed space where they could be quiet with their own thoughts. The chaplain is a very valuable asset to school and children enjoy the contribution he makes to collective worship. Leaders from other churches also deliver worship, widening children’s understanding of Christianity. It is overseen well by the headteacher and governors regularly visit and report back to the governing body. Collective worship is monitored systematically by a range of stakeholders.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education has improved since the last inspection and areas for development have been addressed. A new enquiry-based curriculum is in place where children explore key questions. Assessment is in place which enables pupils to be tracked with half termly and termly assessments and end of year data is enabling the school to build a much clearer picture of progress and attainment. Standards are now mainly in line with age-related expectations with a significant number attaining higher standards. Teaching is now good with much outstanding practice. Children from Reception to Year 6 demonstrate skills of enquiry, reflection and evaluation. Children are outstanding at thinking through issues and expressing their viewpoints. They show a mature approach to discussions and can express themselves freely and effectively. In Year 3 whilst looking at photographs and talking about miracles a range of differing views emerged. ‘I believe that Jesus healing the paralysed man was a miracle.’ ‘I don’t believe in Jesus but I do believe a new-born baby is a miracle.’ ‘I think it’s amazing but not a miracle.’ By Year 6 children are thinking philosophically and formulating their views about big questions such as, ‘Is there life after death?’ ‘I personally don’t believe in heaven.’ ‘I believe in re-incarnation.’ Children are encouraged to ‘go a bit deeper’ when explaining their views and this is helping to develop higher level skills in justifying their opinions. The school provides an atmosphere where children are safe to explore their own spirituality and draw their own conclusions. Children use appropriate vocabulary when discussing different religions. Year 2 children learning about Judaism are able to talk about symbolism. When looking at the Passover meal they can talk about salt water representing the tears of the Jewish people and bitter herbs their suffering. Older children can make comparisons between religions. One child explaining that Christians and Jews believed in the same God but Jews do not believe in Jesus. Much creative work takes place in RE and marking in books is focused on RE objectives so children are able to make good progress. The subject is well led by the headteacher who has a high level of expertise. She is beginning to share some of this role with another member of staff which is a helpful step in distributing the leadership of church school effectiveness more widely.

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

The commitment and vision of the headteacher are the driving forces behind this school’s effectiveness as a church school. She is ably supported by governors, senior leaders and staff in

delivering their shared vision. Leaders consistently promote a vision grounded in Christian values where every child is seen as an individual with body, mind and spirit. Leaders seek to give children 'a sense of themselves with confidence and resilience'. They are particularly successful in achieving this aspiration. They ensure that all children are accepted and loved. 'The school is a place where children can belong regardless of their faith position.' Leaders communicate their values to the whole school community and this results in children having a clear understanding of Christian values and the impact on their lives. The care and nurture of the children is of paramount importance to the leadership team in ensuring children can fulfil their potential. This is reflected in their decision to set up the Nest as a nurture room and appoint the pastoral and learning mentor and also the chaplain with a pastoral role in school. Leaders monitor and evaluate well using a range of activities including learning walks, pupil conversations, work scrutiny, lesson observations and data analysis. These all contribute to the leaders' understanding of strengths and areas for development which feed into the School Development Plan. The school has a very good relationship with the church. The vicar, in his role as chaplain, contributes to collective worship, undertakes some teaching and has pastoral responsibilities. Church members also act as volunteers in various areas of school life. Other partnerships with the diocese and local schools make a positive contribution to school improvement. Training is seen as an important element for developing staff and governor expertise. Further training for middle managers would increase capacity and enable leadership to be more widely distributed. Leaders ensure that Oxenhope Church of England School provides an environment where children thrive, express themselves confidently and develop life skills which will equip them well as they develop and move on to the next stage of their education.

SIAMS report February 2016 Oxenhope CE Primary School, Cross Lane, Oxenhope, Keighley, BD22 9LH