

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Lanercost Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lanercost, Brampton, Carlisle, Cumbria CA8 2HL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Carlisle
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Cumbria
Date of inspection	15 th March 2018
Date of last inspection	February 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	VC 112254
Headteacher	Alison Clarricoats
Inspector's name and number	Anne B. Woodcock 445

School context

Lanercost is a small rural school. It serves a wide area ten miles east of Carlisle. The vast majority of the 70 pupils are of White British heritage and they come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding for social disadvantage is much lower than average. The school supports an above average proportion of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are taught in four classes every morning, reducing to three in the afternoons. A nursery for 14 pupils and an additional teaching space have been created since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lanercost as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The exceptionally strong, determined Christian leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by dedicated staff and skilled governors, has inspired all aspects of church school improvement. This has created a distinctly Christian learning environment in which every member of the school community can flourish and achieve.
- Deeply embedded Christian values have an extremely strong impact on pupils' exemplary behaviour and remarkably positive attitudes to life and learning.
- Pupils' outstanding spiritual and personal development is exceedingly well supported through the creative curriculum, religious education (RE) and collective worship.
- Strong links with the church and local faith communities make a significant contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character and to pupils' spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Explore alternative ways through which pupils' understanding of diversity can be enhanced by providing more opportunities for them to meet people of different faiths and cultures.
- Support other church schools in their development by sharing Lanercost's excellent practice.

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

The school's established Christian vision and values are thoroughly understood and embraced by all members of the school family. The vision, encapsulated in the well-used 'care, believe, achieve' tag line, recognises the unique value of all members of the community. It seeks to ensure that all children are supported so that they can flourish and achieve. 'Christian values are at the forefront in this school. Our children really "get it". They use them in their everyday lives,' explained a parent. Pupils of all ages talk confidently about the values and how they use them. 'Jesus used parables to teach us about values like love, peace and trust,' stated a Year 5 pupil. When thinking about the parable of the Lost Sheep, a Year 1 pupil wrote, 'The shepherd loves his sheep like God loves everyone.'

Behaviour is exemplary because pupils consistently strive to treat others with Christian respect and friendship. The caring Christian ethos, which is immediately felt by visitors, is highly conducive to learning. Pupils' attitudes are remarkably positive. They thoroughly enjoy all that the school offers, so attendance is very good. They are confident, articulate and highly reflective learners. Outstanding teaching, high expectations and the desire to provide the very best possible educational experiences for every pupil, ensure that all make good, sometimes rapid, progress. This is reflected in standards of attainment which are well above those achieved nationally. Parents agree that the way in which their children are known and nurtured as unique individuals upholds the school's vision and values.

Provision for pupils' spiritual and personal development is extremely good. The creative curriculum, based on whole school topics, such as the recent Antarctic theme, is supported by special themed RE weeks and values days. Frequent, high quality experiences, both in and out of school, support pupils' understanding of the world extremely well. Effective use is made of outdoor learning, such as the woodland, so that pupils explore God's world and learn to appreciate the awe and wonder of creation. Reflection is integral to learning across the curriculum, in which Christian values are threaded seamlessly. Pupils express their ideas creatively through art, prose, drama and prayer. The outstanding quality and depth of their personal responses can be seen in vibrant displays and classbooks. One example is the RE week based on Art and Prayer in which they explored the creation story and experienced 'prayer caching' in the grounds of Lanercost Priory. Pupils gain confidence and self-belief through their involvement in after-school clubs and a wide range of visits, as well as through taking responsibility for themselves and others in school and the local community.

RE makes a very substantial contribution to the school's Christian character. It is a valued core subject which inspires and excites pupils. 'RE gives us the space to think about important questions and personal things,' stated a Year 6 pupil. They explore and investigate the meaning of faith and belief, creatively using a wide range of activities. These include Godly Play and drama. Pupils recognise that Christianity is a multi-cultural faith. For example, they studied what it means to be a Christian in Pakistan. Through the study of aspects of Islam, Buddhism and Judaism, they are able to recognise similarities as well as differences in the faiths and cultures of others. However, although they have some first-hand experience gained through, for example, visiting a Buddhist temple and Jewish synagogue, their experience of meeting people of diverse faiths and cultures is limited. As a result, although they respect different beliefs, their understanding of diverse cultures is not so well-developed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is highly valued by all members of the school community. Pupils' attitudes are remarkably positive because they feel fully included and engaged. 'We learn basic life lessons and values,' explained a Year 6 pupil. Pupils particularly enjoy helping to act out stories which, they say, makes worship fun and memorable. Worship themes are firmly based on Christian values, festivals and Bible teaching. As a result, pupils have a remarkably good knowledge of Bible stories and the life and teaching of Jesus. They make highly effective links between Jesus' teaching, Christian values and their own lives. 'The value was perseverance which linked to the Bible story of building the temple in Jerusalem,' wrote a Year 5 pupil. As a result, they strive to apply Christian values. They share friendship and take responsibility for caring for the world and others. 'We raise money for charities because that is what Jesus' teaching tells us,' stated a Year 6 pupil.

Pupils of all ages talk confidently about God and Jesus. 'I believe God made the world and looks after it,' wrote a Year 1 pupil. A Year 6 pupil explained, 'I think God is an all-powerful being. Jesus is God in human form, who came to the world to save us from our sins.' Consideration is given to supporting pupils' awareness of the Christian concept of the Trinity. As a result, pupils know of the concept and seek to explain the mystery through practical examples.

Pupils experience a wide range of worship led by clergy, members of the Methodist church and other Christian leaders. The Priory is used for school worship every month. Parents attend this service in increasing numbers.

Special services held at festival times are very well-attended. Events such as 'Experience Pentecost' are supported by the church. These enhance pupils' understanding of important Christian festivals. They also provided valuable experiences through which pupils explore and develop spiritually. Pupils are familiar with aspects of traditional Anglican practice. For example, the retired vicar currently supporting the school, made the link between Passover, the Last Supper and the Eucharist. Pupils frequently take responsibility for planning and leading collective worship in school and in church. As a result, they demonstrate a good understanding of the nature and purpose of worship.

Prayer and reflection are key features of the school's worship life. Pupils know traditional prayers and graces. They write and use their own prayers frequently. They demonstrate a remarkably mature understanding of the purpose of prayer. For example, a key Stage 2 pupil wrote, 'Please stop racism around the world and help people to be kind, caring and humble.' Pupils make effective use of prayer spaces in and around school. They appreciate the opportunities they give to be still and peaceful.

The monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is robust and highly effective. Feedback from pupils, staff, governors and visitors is used to assess the impact worship has on the community and to inform future planning. For example, the timing of worship in the Priory was changed so that more parents are able to attend. As a result, worship continues to improve and have a profound impact on the beliefs and attitudes of the school family.

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

The calm, inspirational leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by dedicated staff and skilled governors, has driven all aspects of church school distinctiveness. The constant striving to improve outcomes for pupils, through the school's deeply embedded Christian vision, has created a vibrant Christian learning community in which every member is valued and supported. Relationships across the school are harmonious and nurturing, so that everyone knows their well-being is considered in all decision-making.

Governors have a very clear understanding of their strategic role. This is because they regularly undertake training and skills audits to ensure that they are able to address all issues effectively. Robust systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Feedback from governors, staff, pupils and parents informs future planning. Governors ensure that church school issues feature strongly within whole school development planning. One governor commented that diocesan training had facilitated and supported their improved understanding of church school matters. Governors know the school well through frequent visits, observations and discussions with staff and pupils. The issue from the previous denominational inspection has been fully addressed. Changes continue to be monitored. Governors ensure that the needs of all pupils are met through the efficient use of human and financial resources. They have secured extremely strong, committed leadership for RE and collective worship. Both are well-resourced and supported so that they meet all statutory regulations.

The school makes highly effective use of partnerships with other local church schools. One cluster collaborates on the annual RE themed week. The clusters also support aspects of curriculum development and staff training. Governors supported the headteacher and RE leader in completing the Christian Leadership course. This has had a very positive impact on standards in RE and overall Christian distinctiveness. As a result, the school is very well placed to provide support for other church schools and promote future church school leaders.

Pupils know that their opinions are valued and acted upon. Their concept of Christian service and responsibility is developed through community action and charitable efforts, such as the Shoebox Appeal and Christian Aid. As a result they have a good understanding of world issues such as poverty and injustice and they are able to understand that they can, in a small way, make a difference.

The school is therefore exceptionally well placed to move confidently into the future and to share its experience, values and success with others.

SIAMS report March 2018 Lanercost CE Primary School, Lanercost, Brampton, Carlisle, Cumbria CA8 2HL