

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Thornaby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Baysdale Road, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 9DB

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese / Methodist District	York
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Name of multi-academy trust	N/A
Date of inspection	4 November 2016
Date of last inspection	November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 111669
Headteacher	Elaine Hughes-Narborough
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Thornaby is a popular over-subscribed school which is highly regarded in the heart of its community. There are 337 pupils on roll, excluding the nursery. 29% pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, 9.5% are from ethnic minority groups and 19% have special educational needs. The headteacher has been in post for seven years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Thornaby as a Church of England school are good

- The love, commitment and passion which shines through this warm, welcoming Christian and enjoyable family community is supportive and understanding of everyone's differences.
- The Christian dedication of the headteacher and all her staff in personally serving the children and their families ensures the pupils achieve their best. As a result, pupils love coming to school and thrive in their academic and personal success, progress is good and standards are improving.
- The Christian values of love, perseverance, hope and forgiveness underpin all aspects of the school's work and provide a good foundation for life. These make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development.

Areas to improve

- Ensure the regular, robust and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of religious education [RE] so the governors are better informed of this important aspect of Christian distinctiveness.
- Enrich the children's understanding of the seasons of the church year, to include festivals such as Ascension-tide and Pentecost.
- Extend pupils' global awareness of Christianity as a worldwide faith to support their spiritual and cultural development.

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

Thornaby's vision and mission that, 'with God's help we work together to enrich learning, enhance life and build a future of hope for everyone' shines through all school policy and practice. Excellent pastoral care is offered to pupils and their parents. Consequently, attendance has improved and any exclusions are met with love, compassion and forgiveness, with the emphasis on fresh starts. Pupils are given plenty of experiences where they can succeed within a spirit of perseverance and resilience. This support is greatly appreciated by parents. The Christian dedication of

the headteacher and all her staff in personally serving the children and their families ensures every child achieves their best and is encouraged to shine. As a result, all pupils make good progress, given their starting points. Data shows an improving picture. In 2016 attainment at Key Stage 1 was significantly above the national average in all areas at both the expected level, and at greater depth. At Key Stage 2 progress in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly above floor standards and close to the national average. Vulnerable children are given extra support with focussed interventions where any barriers to learning are removed. A good example is the success of maths mastery chants and songs, which parents are singing at home with their children. In addition, the quality of homework has improved and there is an improved family ethos in school. This is because staff are always looking for ways to help children, such as identifying extra support for summer born children. Moreover, the school firmly believes that the individual must reach their potential with their education, spiritual and emotional wellbeing whilst being accepting of everybody's differences. It raises self-esteem so everyone knows they are a valued member of their community. Staff say, 'we believe we offer love and support to both parents and children alike. We are always available to help and listen to parents and pupils when needed. We strive to make our school a place, not only of learning, but a place where children feel safe and happy and learn to respect everyone and grow to know the love of God'. In this context, staff are able to freely talk to children about the Christian faith. Staff trust each other and the children and staff know they are valued. Such respect results in exemplary relationships and behaviour. SMSC books celebrate Christian values and the good learning taking place, not just in RE, but in all aspects of the curriculum. Diversity week showed respect of one another. As an example, Year 5 pupils think deeply about homophobic bullying and homosexuality. The Archbishop of York paid a surprise visit to the school on his six month Diocesan pilgrimage of prayer, witness and blessing. He visited all areas of school including nursery, so from a very young age children experience what it means to be part of a wider family. However, the school has correctly identified the need to extend pupils' experiences of Christianity as a worldwide faith to support their spiritual and cultural development. Pupils say RE enables them to focus on history and Old Testament stories, such as Daniel in the Lions' Den, as well as Jesus' teaching in the New Testament. They insightfully comment, 'there is no donkey in the real Bible' when discussing the Christmas story as reflected in the New Testament accounts. They go on to say, 'it is virtually impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle' when discussing how Jesus taught and related to people. Thornaby also uses the 'What If learning' approach so pupils can look at things differently from a Christian point of view. RE therefore makes a good contribution to pupils' SMSC development and to the school's Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils at Thornaby now have a greater involvement in worship through membership of the pupil worship group, showing how the school has moved on since the last inspection. The school enjoys a variety of worship leaders from the local churches, with pupils also enjoying planning and leading worship themselves. Good examples include the pupil led worship as part of Anti-bullying week as well as the recent worship for All Saints-tide. Pupils were able to share their learning about the saints, such as St Jude and local northern saints, such as St Cuthbert. Strong links with St Mark's Church 'encourage and develops faith and a personal understanding and wider picture of the world'. Pupils are growing in their understanding of the Holy Trinity. They gather for worship in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit and know that Jesus is God's Son. However, they are less secure in their knowledge of the Holy Spirit and in particular Ascension-tide and Pentecost in the church year. They welcome their parish priest to help them deepen their understanding and nurture their spiritual development. Prayer makes a strong contribution to the worshipping life of the school, with well used prayer boxes in every classroom. More importantly, some pupils say that the most important part of worship for them is 'speaking to God'. Pupils are confident to lead everyone in The Lord's Prayer in whole school worship, even for the first time. From a very young age, pupils are aware of the importance of prayer. For example, even the youngest children encourage their parents to pray at home and model prayer for them. This is because Early Years Foundation Stage use a child-centred approach to class worship which engages and involves them in age appropriate ways. Whole school worship involves and engages adults and pupils alike. In addition, church services, such as Harvest, Christingle and Easter, enabling parents to join in worship for festival services through the year. Classes of pupils take it in turns to go to St Mark's Church for a monthly Mass. Significantly, a number of pupils have been confirmed.

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

A young member of staff says the best way to sum up the essence of Thornaby is 'love thy neighbour' He praises 'the amount of love, commitment and passion shines through the school, from the top of the school throughout. It's amazing'. Indeed, Thornaby's school vision is revisited at the start of every year. The creation of the ethos committee involves governors who meet termly to evaluate each aspect of church school distinctiveness to determine how effective it is as a church school. Future development of the school as a church school is demonstrated through their commitment to cluster meetings, diocesan involvement and to applying for the RE

Quality Mark [REQM]. Governors and staff have benefitted from diocesan training. The RE subject leader has found cluster meetings 'very helpful, sharing good practice with other people in the area' She carries out book scrutinies and lesson observations termly. For example, RE books denote reflective comments from teachers in orange marking. Governors monitor RE and worship, with both these key areas meeting statutory requirements. However, the school acknowledges that regular, robust and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of RE with governors and RE subject leader working in partnership together with the RE team leader will ensure this key aspect of Christian distinctiveness has a higher profile. To this end, next term's focus on SMSC and spiritual development will encompass the monitoring of RE and will be taken to the school improvement committee. Parents are proud that Thornaby provides a good foundation for life for their children. They speak highly of the teachers knowing all the children by name. One parent said, 'it will be like losing a limb when my child leaves here. I can't praise the school enough'. Consequently, children love coming to school and even want to come at the weekend. This shows the huge part that school plays in the lives of the families. Parents go on to say their children have 'come on leaps and bounds with a lot of support. We have been given hope. There are 30 children in the class, but I feel my child is the only one. The school listens to individual children'. As a result, standards of achievement, both academic and personal, are good. This is attributed to the values which are instilled in this family school with its commitment to wellbeing, which parents say helps their children later in life. Parents appreciate the links with St Mark's Church. The school values immensely the support they receive from the diocese. Community links are good, with the children raising money for local charities, living out loving their neighbour in practice.

SIAMS report November 2016 Thornaby CE VC Primary School, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 9DB