

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Embsay Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary School

Pasture Road  
Embsay  
Skipton  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 6RH

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	Outstanding
<b>Diocese</b>	Leeds
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Name of multi-academy trust / federation [delete as appropriate]	N/A
Date/s of inspection	4 May 2017
Date of last inspection	1 Nov 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 121559
Headteacher	Fiona Prest
Inspector's name and number	Geraldine Cooper 696

#### School context

Embsay Church of England CE VC Primary school serves a rural community a short distance from the market town of Skipton. There are currently 209 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. Pupils are from a range of socio-economic backgrounds but the proportion in receipt of pupil premium is below national average. The school is designated as Enhanced Mainstream Provision for Communication and Interaction and attracts pupils from outside the immediate catchment area. However, the number of pupils with SEND is below national average. There have been significant changes in school leadership since the previous inspection. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2016 following the acting headship of the current deputy headteacher.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Embsay church of England VC primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The clarity of vision shared by the headteacher, senior leaders and governing body for the schools current and future distinctiveness as a church school.
- The commitment and capacity of the headteacher, in collaboration with senior leaders, governors and the wider school community, to consistently develop and embed Christian values and ethos across all aspects of school life to the benefit of all pupils.
- The strength and leadership of collective worship and R .
- The very strong and mutually supportive relationship between the school, local churches and the wider community.

#### Areas to improve.

- Recognise opportunities in the curriculum to enhance pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world religion.
- Broaden the range of use of stimulus in collective worship through the effective deployment of ICT.
- Further engage all members of the school community in the monitoring and evaluation of the distinctiveness of the school as a church school.

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

The headteacher and senior leaders have strongly re-focused the Christian ethos and values across all aspects of school life. Pupils are able to identify the school's values as being distinctively Christian because they are rooted in Biblical teaching and linked to their own lives. The school's very strong links with the church ensures a continuum from the pre-school provision and pupils starting school. As a consequence of the strongly Christian ethos of inclusivity, families from outside the Church and immediate vicinity of the school feel equally welcomed. Pastoral care for the children and their families is intrinsic to the school, being evident in the strong bond between the school, the church, the pupils and their families. Staff are excellent role models and consequently the behaviour of pupils is very good. Any incidences of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with in a swift and sensitive manner which reflects the Christian ethos of the school. All staff have a deep appreciation of the many factors which can affect pupil progress and they deploy a wide range of pastoral and academic interventions to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported. The effectiveness of these interventions is monitored frequently at pupil progress meetings attended by all staff. As a consequence of this, progress and attainment are in line with or above national average. All members of the school community attribute the progress that pupils make to the nurturing environment developed as a consequence of the school's strong Christian ethos. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) is a consistent thread through a broad and balanced curriculum. This is exemplified in the way that pupils have engaged with issues such as justice and equality and implemented policies such as Fair Trade. Teachers have not taken full advantage of the existing curriculum to develop pupils understanding of Christianity as a world religion. Staff have fully embraced the principles of philosophy for children (P4C) which has a very strong influence on pupils' capacity to explore commonality and difference in beliefs and opinions. Pupils are therefore able to explore questions of morality, meaning and purpose and to articulate confidently their own interpretation of spirituality. New initiatives in RE are already having an impact on the quality of learning which is exemplified by the level at which pupils could talk about the resurrection and relate this to their own ideas about sacrifice and life after death. The religious education curriculum ensures that pupils develop an understanding of a range of religions and beliefs in addition to Christianity. Pupils of other faiths are confident and articulate in talking about their beliefs and explaining them to their peers who respond with genuine interest. Through the very strong links with the local parish church and the Methodist chapel pupils have an appreciation of diversity within Christianity. However, their understanding of Christianity as a world religion is not fully developed.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.**

The centrality of collective worship to school life is evident in the way that all members of the school community talk with enthusiasm about which aspects of collective worship they enjoy the most. Pupils have an understanding of the elements of worship and are able to describe how these make them feel close to God. Effective use of Bible stories and learning about the festivals of Christmas and Easter equip pupils to talk knowledgeably about the 'specialness' of Jesus. They are able to relate his life and teachings to the Christian values promoted within the school. In conjunction with the celebration of major festivals, and learning in RE, collective worship enables pupils to talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 'Values for Life' provide themes for collective worship which are linked effectively to Bible stories and applied to pupils' own life experiences. Parents and pupils ascribe the positive behaviours and relationships within the school to these teachings and pupils make consistent reference to the impact of Biblical teaching on their relationships with each other. Collective worship is the responsibility of a member of the senior leadership team who has a clear understanding of the way in which worship impacts on the school. Evaluation and pupil-voice have ensured that a wide repertoire of Bible stories are used in collective worship. Effective organisation and planning ensures that there is both consistency and diversity of experience within worship. Leaders, including visiting clergy, are able to follow a coherent worship programme which enables them to use a variety of strategies to engage pupils. Pupils regularly plan and lead worship with a knowledge and understanding of the elements of worship and the impact that it should have on their peers. Pupils are inspired by peer leadership of worship and younger pupils are observed presenting worship to their friends and families. The school is fortunate in being able to provide live music in worship which enhances pupils worship through singing. However, leaders are addressing the limitations of existing ICT as this limits the range of stimuli that leaders are able to use. The local incumbent and Methodist minister work closely with the school and alternate the leading of worship on a weekly basis. Pupils, therefore, develop an understanding of different practices within Christian worship. The local church and chapel are regularly visited by pupils who have a sense of belonging within the ecumenical community of the village. The use of prayer throughout the school day and the presence of prayer trees in each classroom creates an environment in which pupils view prayer as part of daily life. The thoughtful design of the external reflection area is indicative of pupils' appreciation of the impact of the senses on spirituality. Pupils see this, and the wider natural environment, as places to find peace and think about God. Parents and pupils are appreciative of the fact that pupils are encouraged to express, and reflect upon, their own beliefs which they can explore in a secure and non-judgemental community.

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

The headteacher has built on the effective work of the acting headteacher and together they have inspired the school in reasserting its distinctive Christian character. All members of the school community have a very clear understanding of, and commitment to, the school's Christian ethos. The progress made by all pupils within the school is directly linked by the school community to the Christian values and ethos of the school. The relationship between Governors and the school is very positive. Governors have a sound understanding of the factors which contribute to the school's distinctively Christian ethos and act as well informed critical friends. Distinctiveness as a church school is an agenda item at each full governing body meeting and is included in the school improvement plan. Plans are regularly evaluated and RAG (red/amber/green) rated to ensure that progress is made. The headteacher has already implemented a wide range of initiatives designed to enhance spiritual development and has begun to create an environment in which children can 'live their lives in fullness'. This environment has fostered positive relationships with families who feel very well supported, particularly in times of difficulty. The school has a very broad definition of 'vulnerable' and has effective strategies in place to implement support for children. The effectiveness of the support and the needs of the child are tracked carefully to ensure that they are appropriate and effective. The curriculum has been enhanced through Philosophy for Children (P4C) which is already contributing to increased confidence amongst children of all ages. RE has a high profile within the school and is led by a member of the senior leadership team (SLT). The school has recently adopted 'Understanding Christianity' and it is evident in the way pupils are able to discuss concepts related to Easter that they are developing an understanding of complex concepts such as life after death. Links between local churches and the school are very strong. Class P4C big books have been used by the incumbent to stimulate discussion in her church. The congregation is appreciative of the engagement of the school in church activities and in worship, for example at Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day, as well as at major festivals. The school also works closely with the Methodist chapel and the local minister who leads school worship on alternative weeks to the incumbent. This has helped to develop pupils' understanding of diversity within Christianity although they have not yet developed an understanding of Christianity as a world faith. Through curriculum and enrichment activities the school engages with a range of local and global initiatives. Pupils have developed an active understanding of equality and social justice through support for projects such as Fair Trade and the Craven Refugee Support Group. Pupils have developed an understanding of diversity through participation in a range of sporting and cultural activities within the local cluster. School leaders have engaged with a wide range of Diocesan training which has begun to inform the development of a new vision statement.

SIAMS report May 2017 Emsay Church of England VC Primary School BD23 6RH