

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

High Coniscliffe Church of England Primary School

Ulnaby Lane High Coniscliffe DL2 2LL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Durham
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	1 October 2016
Name of multi-academy trust	The Dove Trust
Date/s of inspection	23 November 2017
Date of last inspection	28 November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Converter academy 142961
Executive Head Teacher / Head of School	Wendy Aitken Executive Head Teacher Kaye Boyce Head of School
Inspector's name and number	Valerie Hall 859

School context

High Coniscliffe Church of England Primary school is smaller than average but has higher than average pupils eligible for support for special educational needs and disability. There are 106 pupils attending currently. Standards are well above national averages, apart from writing which is broadly in line. High Coniscliffe Primary has formed The Dove Trust with St Mary's Voluntary Aided Primary School in Cockerton. The head of High Coniscliffe Primary school is the executive head teacher of both schools. There is a recently appointed head of school at High Coniscliffe Primary School. Standards have improved significantly since 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of High Coniscliffe Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- This is a school of overwhelming hospitality to both visitors and its own community. This is rooted in a deep love exemplified by Jesus.
- The Christian character of the school shapes its approach to the success of all pupils, including their well-being and care.
- The school has a great appreciation of the importance of Christianity as a global faith in a largely mono-cultural setting. This global aspect is frequently discussed as part of well-balanced curriculum.
- The links between worship, religious education (RE) and spiritual, moral and cultural education of pupils are prominent and displayed in all areas of the school.
- Worship is clearly inspirational and inclusive with many opportunities for a range of spiritual reflection.
- Pupils have the opportunity to discuss faith and what it means to them to a very deep level. All aspects of Christian faith and its expression are respected whilst worship remains linked to the Anglican calendar.
- Consistency and coherence of leadership has been achieved in a very short time, leading to great trust in leaders to ensure the school remains successful.

Areas to improve

- To increase opportunities for staff to engage in personal prayer and reflection at staff and CPD events.
- Ensure high standards in worship and religious education are maintained as the trust develops and changes.

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

The head of school and executive head teacher speak with conviction about a tangible sense of purpose underpinned by perseverance and determination, which is explored in worship and evident in strong academic performance by the majority of pupils. Academic standards are high at all levels apart from writing in 2017, which is in line with national levels, with standards in reading and maths well above. There is significant improvement on 2016 outcomes. Attendance is good. Behaviour is exemplary and children are autonomous and self-reliant. The school and its leaders recognise that there is something unique in every person, as a unique child of God and celebrate this at every opportunity. Children are encouraged to talk about their faith and beliefs and talents are shared in worship. This celebration of uniqueness shapes the approach to attendance and behaviour which are exemplary. Although numbers of pupils eligible for additional support are lower than national, they are higher than might be expected in a school of this size. The executive head teacher attributes this to the high level of support for pupils with additional needs, thus school has rightly earned a reputation in the local community for its exemplary love for all. The clearly defined values of perseverance and endurance, asserted by all members of the school underpin the whole community's commitment to success for all pupils. The school's statement: 'I can if I try' permeates the schools activity at all levels. 'Love for one another and love for God' is the biblical basis for the work of the school and it is made evident in the diligence of all. Support for pupils with additional needs goes well beyond the classroom. Pupils demonstrate support for each other at playtime, in worship and at lunch time, without prompting by adults. Work on proverbs from other countries and how they are interpreted in the lives of children is an outstanding example of the link between spiritual, moral and cultural learning linked with worship and religious education. Relationships between all members of the school are an exemplary representation of the love Jesus showed for everyone. Evidence from RE books and in discussion shows that pupil voice is strong and effective. Pupils are encouraged to express their views on religious matters and hold an opinion. As a result, RE contributes significantly to pupil's understanding of faith but it also contributes to their sense of self to a very high degree. RE also helps pupils live out the values of the school by ensuring they have an opportunity to discuss how to apply them in context.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is inspirational and inclusive. Whole school worship includes aspects of Bible teaching and followed the termly theme of the Jesse Tree, as part of the development of work on Advent. All adults attend and the experience is joyful and uplifting. Values of friendship, thankfulness, justice, hope and endurance are made clear in acts of worship and in planning, which links ethos, Christian character and biblical teaching together. There are many varied opportunity for worship, including class worship and opportunities to worship in church. Pupils have a well-rounded worship experience that allows them to understand that prayer can be personal and public but both have profound meaning. This was highly evident in pupils' description of prayer in the Jubilee garden when they spoke convincingly about how they felt a deep sense of respect for creation. The Jesse Tree display at the front of school helps pupils to focus on current themes and acts as a reminder of Bible stories and their application to modern life. The chaplain plans worship across the trust, ensuring it is consistent but she also ensures that pupils have a chance to lead and participate at every level. They do so with confidence and skill. The life and work of Jesus is prominent in planning and pupils and adults have the opportunity to explore their understanding of the Trinity in many creative ways, through art and in music. Parents value collective worship in all its forms. They enjoy discussing it with their children but also participating in class worship and in the local church at key Anglican festivals. One parent expressed that he took part and valued participation in ways he would not otherwise have chosen, demonstrating the impact collective worship is having on pupils and their families. One pupil said he enjoyed church because you can 'breathe in the awe'

Class prayer areas help children with moments of peaceful reflection and the school is working hard to develop places of quiet inspiration and wonder. School has used its rural setting to great effect and created a haven for adults and pupils. Worship is evaluated systematically by staff, pupils and leaders. Questionnaires and suggestion boxes are responded to and pupils feel they have an impact. This was shown when a pupil described how she had suggested more singing and stories in worship. Governors have a clear view of worship through their evaluation and understand how it can be improved. Pupils talk about how they enjoy worship because it helps them to show reverence and respect but they also value how they have the opportunity to think about issues in the world. They are clear about how worship can affect behaviour but also that worship teaches forgiveness which underpins good behaviour and the school's response to bullying. There have been a number of links with local churches that enhance teaching and worship, including the Open the Book project and worship led by other parish members from St Edwin's Church.

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

Standards are high in all aspects of the work of the school and clearly articulated by leaders at all levels and expressed in the Christian value of perseverance. Performance is frequently and systematically evaluated and improvement is planned for. This is highly evident in the school development plan. There is a clear view as to how success will be maintained and leaders all feel that the creation of a trust will help secure success in the future. Carefully considered recent appointments to the leadership team have allowed staff to flourish and take on new and demanding roles which strengthen the Christian vision for the school. An example of this is the appointment of the head of school from another church school locally and the professional development of other staff from within the school to undertake significant leadership roles. Staff share a meal every day, made by a fellow member of the school community. This unique expression of Christian character ensures all members have a daily opportunity to come together. This helps cement strong mutual support and a very clear understanding of the challenges each person faces. Staff are thus able to support each other and all pupils in a highly effective manner. The support offered within this meal shows how the love of community, articulated by leaders and shown in biblical teaching, is lived out and ensures the wellbeing of all.

Teachers speak of how they have been drawn to the expressed Christian values of endurance and friendship, and so have been able to commit to the success of school and ensure strong academic performance. This is attributed to the clear Christian leadership of the head of school and executive head teacher. The executive head has thought deeply about succession planning and is developing the role of chaplain to ensure support for staff and their understanding of the continued relevance of Christian values as the trust grows. There is consistency and coherence in leadership which results in high academic achievement and high standards for pupils and adults to aspire to. The Christian character of the school has remained consistent throughout conversion and leaders feel it is strengthened by the partnership with another school. The role of chaplain, now a trust role, has added an outstanding dimension to the school in that RE and worship are systematically planned to a very high standard and discussion about Christian ethos, RE and worship remain very high on local governors' and directors' agendas. School evaluation is clear and thorough. The executive head teacher and head of school have a strong relationship which is moving the school forward to the next stage in its development. Leaders' willingness to experiment and adapt through the process of conversion to trust status has resulted in school leadership that knows its own strengths and weaknesses very well and can hold the school to account. Staff at all levels feel that they are challenged and supported in equal measure. They can cite numerous examples of how they are held to account for standards and safeguarding issues, in a way that upholds the essential value of each individual within the love of God. Partnerships with the local churches are strong and the vicar of St Edwin's parish church is a member of the local academy council, thus formalising an already strong link. The chaplain maintains strong links with the world wide Anglican Communion through visits to Lesotho and Germany, to the benefit of the whole school community. Relationships with families, parents and carers are exemplary. They contribute to the success of the school as volunteers but also as partners in providing outstanding Christian opportunities for children, by supporting the Open the Book project and volunteering at all school events that are linked to church. They articulate their trust in the leadership of the school to make decisions which will secure the future of this small school but also to continue to provide the education they so highly value. One parent described the school as a 'school with a soul'.

SIAMS report November 2017 High Coniscliffe Church of England Primary School Darlington DL2 2LL