

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

### Monk Fryston Church of England Primary School

Chestnut Green  
Monk Fryston  
Leeds  
LS25 5PN

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	York
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	1 May 2018
Name of multi-academy trust	STAR Multi-Academy Trust
Date of inspection	8 June 2018
Date of last inspection	March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 145778
Headteacher	Rick Weights
Inspector's name and number	Geraldine Cooper 696

#### School context

Monk Fryston is an average-sized primary school. It serves the villages of Monk Fryston and Hillum, situated between York and Leeds.

The majority of pupils are from white British families. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is lower than the national average, as is the proportion of disadvantaged pupils.

The school is a national teaching school and became an academy in May 2018. In recent years there have been significant changes in teaching staff and governance. The school is supported by the local curate whilst the local church is without a rector.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Monk Fryston as a Church of England school are outstanding

- All members of the school community are strongly influenced by the school's clearly defined Christian values which have a direct impact on relationships and learning.
- School leaders are consistent and confident in articulating the significance of the school's distinctive Christian character which leads to a high level of morale and aspiration amongst staff and pupils.
- Pupils are actively involved in regularly planning, leading and evaluating collective worship which uses Bible teachings to make the school's Christian values relevant to the daily lives of all pupils.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about religious education (RE) and appreciate that it helps them to understand their own beliefs and those of others.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that the school's Christian vision and ethos is consistently and robustly expressed in order that the school can maintain and strengthen its distinctively Christian character.
- Further develop strategies for the evaluation of collective worship to assess its impact on pupils' spiritual development.

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

The school asserts proudly 'this is a church school' and this is affirmed through the excellent relationships amongst all members of the school community which are rooted in the school's strong Christian ethos. The school's Christian values of love, humility, courage, hope, friendship and respect are embedded in the curriculum and across school life so that everyone feels that they are unique and valued. This creates an atmosphere in which pupils want to learn and the proportion of pupils achieving above national expectations is high. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development through a carefully planned curriculum. Teachers have a clear and shared understanding of spiritual development which they actively promote across all subject areas. As a consequence of this, pupils have a high level of confidence and are sensitive to the needs of others. This creates an environment in which vulnerable pupils feel supported and make progress at or above national expectations. Levels of bullying are very low and are dealt with compassionately. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and as a consequence, attendance is above national average.

Teachers are very conscious of the challenges that their pupils face and have developed a carefully structured system of pastoral care which ensures that social and emotional concerns are quickly and appropriately addressed. Incidents of inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour are monitored carefully and are dealt with through restorative justice which ensures the safety and security of all members of the school. Consequently, pupils have a strong sense of trust in the adults around them and their exceptional nurturing practice is reflected in the way that older pupils take responsibility for the wellbeing of younger pupils. This is demonstrative of the 'loving Christian family ethos' which is strongly shared across the school. Pupils are supported in taking risks so that they build resilience and feel confident and enthusiastic about making the transition to a new class or school. Because the school's values have been carefully embedded, pupils develop an appreciation of the needs of others. Whilst being eager to demonstrate their knowledge and ideas, they are sensitive and encouraging to their peers.

The curriculum is planned carefully to guarantee that pupils benefit from a range of teaching styles and engaging activities. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to meet with people of different beliefs and cultures. The school's engagement in the international Erasmus project has enabled pupils to develop and share a love of reading with their peers from across Europe. This, coupled with the opportunity to meet with visitors from different faiths and cultures, has meant that pupils recognise and articulate the value of diversity and the commonality of values. This was evident in the way Year 6 pupils talked about their RE lesson, stating, 'Although Christians and Muslims believe different things, the same values are important to us.'

Pupils are enthusiastic about RE and there is a clear commitment from teaching staff to make their lessons active and engaging. The RE curriculum, alongside collective worship, effectively embeds the school's Christian values in Bible stories and teachings. The increasingly challenging curriculum allows pupils to develop their own ideas and reflective responses which they articulate with both confidence and respect. This is reflected in the way that older pupils discussed the importance of RE in understanding difference, stating, 'If adults had learned about different faiths they wouldn't say the things they do; it's just that they don't know it's OK to be different'.

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

The centrality of collective worship to the school's Christian ethos is evident in the headteacher's commitment to its thorough planning, preparation and evaluation. He has ensured that all who lead worship have a clear understanding of its necessary elements, and use these to ensure that it is effective, inclusive and meaningful. The school systematically evaluates the impact of collective worship. Whilst pupil voice is used effectively as part of this process, there is insufficient emphasis on the regular evaluation of the influence of worship on pupils' spiritual development.

Pupil worship leaders plan and lead worship regularly and with confidence. The pupils are involved in all aspects of worship and devise their own effective means to engage and communicate with all members of the school community. One pupil commented, 'Sometimes because the idea comes from us, the others understand it better, because we are closer to them.' Pupils are clearly engaged in worship through prayer, story, activity and singing. Because collective worship opens with a simple Trinitarian liturgy and the lighting of three candles, pupils have developed an awareness of the Christian concept of the Trinity from an early age. Older pupils can explain this and make links with appropriate festivals and Bible stories. Pupils of all ages make links between Christian teachings, biblical stories and their own behaviour.

The centrality of prayer in school life is evident in the way that pupils write their own prayers for special celebrations or in response to the curriculum. Reflection areas, inside and outside the school, have enabled pupils to develop a sense of personal spirituality which they are comfortable to talk about and describe as a time 'to think deeply and from our hearts'. Reflection and prayer also generate random acts of kindness in which pupils demonstrate their care for members of their own school community and beyond. Participation in the Archbishop of

York's Young Leaders scheme establishes patterns of community service amongst pupils. They are enthusiastic in their support for local and national charities, which they ascribe to the Christian values of the school. Pupils' appreciate the recognition that they receive during worship for putting values into action and also for their achievements within and outside school. All of these are celebrated in the 'golden book' and shared with parents through the school newsletter and social media.

The school has strong links with the local church which have been maintained through the current vacancy for a parish rector. Pupils participated in the retirement service of the former rector and are recognised by the parishioners as making a significant contribution to the cost of the restoration of the Church roof. They attended the re-consecration service led by the Archbishop of York, whose visit to the school has contributed to pupils' appreciation of the wider diocesan and Anglican communities. An example of the mutually supportive strong links between church and school is the regular inclusion of pupils' work in the parish magazine.

Pupils benefit from their experiences of Anglican liturgy in the traditional setting of their local church at the major festivals of the church year and the annual leavers' service. The curate leads collective worship in school on a regular basis and collaborates with the headteacher over its planning.

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

The headteacher has established a leadership team in which there is a consistent and confident appreciation of the school's distinctiveness as a church school and the impact that this has on the school community. They are proactive in their response to change and embody the school's principle of 'Look up. Aim high'. Because change is managed in the context of the school's Christian distinctiveness, staff feel valued and morale is high. Teachers have benefitted from middle leader training which has raised their awareness of their own potential as school leaders. All staff have access to professional development which has equipped them with the skills to deliver a challenging and dynamic curriculum. As a consequence of this, pupils are highly motivated, and achievement is significantly above national standards. School leaders are driven by a genuine care for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, whose progress is tracked efficiently so that the impact of intervention is monitored, and provision amended as necessary. Where pupil performance is not in line with national expectations, it is evident that progress has been made.

School leaders have established excellent, mutually supportive relationships with neighbouring schools as part of the STAR Teaching Schools Alliance. Pupils have benefitted from opportunities to mix with peers from a range of schools which have prepared them for transition to secondary school. The school has a strong relationship with the diocese and the local authority and is pro-active in sharing expertise and offering support to other schools. The headteacher's experience as a national leader in education has been instrumental in the founding of the STAR Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The new MAT has formally recognised the positive impact of distinctive Christian character on pupils' academic and SMSC development.

Governors are well equipped to provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. They have a sound appreciation of the school's distinctively Christian ethos and values. However, the school's Christian distinctiveness is not consistently and clearly part of the vocabulary of daily school life and its documentation. Governors are involved in church school self-evaluation and, with senior school leaders, are insightful in their identification of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are strongly supported by all members of the school community in their assertion that the Christian ethos is 'the heartbeat of the school'.

The school takes an active role in church and community life and maintains close contact with parents through a welcoming 'open door' policy. Parents ascribe the confidence and happiness of their children to the school's Christian ethos which promotes the education of the whole child. Because they are informed of the collective worship focus for the week they can share the school's Christian values at home which develops a continuity between home and school.

RE is co-ordinated by an enthusiastic and committed teacher who has developed a clear strategy for further developing the subject. The school has invested in training and resources to ensure that RE is at the fore of curriculum development which has resulted in a reinvigorated and dynamic approach to teaching and learning in the subject.

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