

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Carlisle
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	
Local Authority	Cumbria
Date of inspection	17 November 2016
Date of last inspection	28 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	112265
Headteacher	Simon Brabant
Inspector's name and number	Anne B. Woodcock 445

S.I.A.M.S. Report

Storth Church of England Primary School
Storth Road, Storth, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7JA

School Context

Storth is a small voluntary controlled school. The number of pupils on roll has increased significantly over the past two years. The school serves rural communities near Milnthorpe in South Cumbria. Almost all of the 46 pupils are of White British heritage and they come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium grant is much lower than average. The proportion of pupils with additional needs is in line with national levels. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.

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

- Pupils' excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to life and learning reflect their understanding of Christian values of friendship, trust and respect.
- The headteacher's purposeful leadership, ably supported by committed governors and staff, is developing the school's distinctive Christian character, raising standards and improving outcomes for all learners.
- Highly effective links with the church and local community contribute significantly to the school's Christian character and to pupils' personal and spiritual development.

- Excellent relationships between staff, pupils and parents reflect the Christian values of love and compassion.

They have a very positive influence on pupils' progress and achievement.

Areas to improve

- Establish effective links with schools or communities in the UK or other areas of the world. This is to support children's understanding of cultural diversity and global issues.
- Extend provision for pupils' spiritual growth through the development of an outdoor worship and reflective space.

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

The school's calm, welcoming Christian character is immediately apparent to visitors. Relationships founded on the Christian values of love and compassion support all members of the school family. Pupils' behaviour is excellent because they strive to apply the Christian values of trust and friendship. 'Jesus taught about values like forgiveness and respect. We need to show these values to lead the kind of life God wants us to lead,' explained a Year 5 pupil. Children are eager, confident learners who thoroughly enjoy all that the school offers. Levels of attendance and engagement in extra-curricular activities are high. All children, including those with additional needs, are exceptionally well supported because everyone is valued as a unique child of God. Standards of attainment continue to rise. Pupils make expected progress from their starting points and many exceed age-related expectations. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is promoted very effectively through the rich, creative curriculum. This includes regular visits and frequent forest school activities which facilitate experiential learning.

Children are challenged and excited by these collaborative learning experiences. They develop an appreciation of the natural world and recognise their responsibilities to help to conserve God's creation.

Parents fully support the school's strong focus on outdoor learning. They comment very positively on the impact these experiences have on their children's emotional well-being and personal development. Children express their ideas maturely within an atmosphere of trust and acceptance using art, music and prose. Displays reflect the breadth of their learning experiences and the pride taken in presenting work of high quality.

Children are reflective and thoughtful learners.

They value and use the classroom prayer and reflection spaces they have helped to make. They respond to worship themes contributing their thoughts

and ideas in words and pictures. Religious education (RE) has a high profile. It consistently reflects the school's distinctive and inclusive character. It makes a very significant contribution to children's SMSC development. Pupils enjoy and are challenged by the enquiry-based RE curriculum through which they explore faith and beliefs. Older pupils can compare key aspects of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism.

'We need to respect the beliefs of all people,' stated a Year 5 pupil.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Children value and enjoy their collective worship experiences because they feel included and involved. Themes based on Bible teaching and Christian values inspire action and influence thinking. 'We know about generosity and friendship from parables like the Widow's Mite and Good Samaritan,' explained a Year 4 pupil. 'That's why we try to help others and not just think about ourselves.' Children discuss Old Testament stories and they talk confidently about events in Jesus' life celebrated at Easter and Christmas. Daily worship is an inclusive and participatory experience for staff and pupils. Worship led by staff, pupils, clergy and visitors provides varied experiences of different styles of Christian worship.

Pupils experience aspects of traditional Anglican worship both in school and in church. Outdoor worship events such as the 'Journey of Jesus', supported by the church and involving the community, provide children with memorable experiences. These contribute significantly to their spiritual growth and understanding of key times in the Christian year. Children understand God as a protector who is always present. They recognise Jesus as God's Son, sent to help everyone. However, their understanding of God as the Holy Spirit is at an early stage. Prayer and reflection are key features of worship.

Children are familiar with traditional prayers such as the Lord's Prayer. They show an understanding of the purpose of prayer. They write prayers for use at different times of the day. However, the school recognises that an outdoor worship and reflective space would enhance provision for children's spiritual development. The extent to which children are involved in planning, leading and evaluating worship is impressive.

Older children lead worship each week. All children are involved in helping to deliver worship in school and in church at festival and other times. Parents and the local community value and attend these services in considerable numbers. Governors have ensured that robust monitoring and evaluation engages all members of the school community. Foundation governors observe and sometimes lead worship. They talk with staff and pupils so that they know the impact worship is having on the community. Feedback from pupils, staff, parents and visitors leads to continuous improvement.

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

The highly effective leadership of the headteacher has created an inclusive and distinctly Christian learning community. All members of the school family say that they feel valued and supported.

The Christian values of hope and compassion are reflected in the strong relationships seen across the school. These influence all aspects of church school improvement, particularly those involving difficult financial and human resource issues. As a result, staff morale is high.

Governors

Governors know the school very well. They visit regularly, meeting with children, staff and parents. Feedback informs self-evaluation and ensures that church school issues are prioritised within school improvement planning.

Foundation governors monitor and evaluate RE and collective worship robustly. As a result, issues from the last inspection have been addressed fully and changes have led to continued improvement.

Governors have secured highly effective leadership for RE and collective worship. Both are well supported and resourced. They meet statutory requirements. Governors ensure that human and financial resources are used effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. The enriched curriculum is founded upon distinctly Christian principles so that it supports pupils' personal development and raises standards. Church and community links are impressive.

The school is at the heart of village and parish life. Regular community events promote children's understanding of Christian service and personal responsibility. As a result, pupils know that they can make a difference, conserve God's creation and support the less fortunate. However, the school recognises that links with different communities could provide children with greater awareness of diversity and global issues. Strategic planning is good. Staff are motivated by professional development provided through effective partnerships with the diocese and other church schools. Governors benefit from diocesan training and support. The commitment to developing the Christian ethos and staff expertise means the school is well-placed to meet future challenges.