

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

### Spofforth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Spofforth Lane Spofforth North Yorkshire HG3 1BA	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Leeds</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Name of federation	Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth CE (VC) Primary Schools
Date of inspection	8 February 2017
Date of last inspection	16 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 121592
Headteacher	Paul Griffiths
Inspector's name and number	Lorraine Hanson 769

#### School context

Spofforth is a small rural primary school serving the village of Spofforth and nearby villages. The school entered a federation with Follifoot CE (VC) Primary school in October 2015, following a year of formal collaboration between the two schools. There are 107 pupils on roll in the school, plus 14 part-time nursery children. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is smaller than average, as also is the proportion of pupils supported by Pupil Premium funding. There is currently a clergy vacancy at the Parish Church of All Saints.

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

- The headteacher's inspired leadership, ably supported by school leaders, staff, governors, clergy and licensed reader promotes a shared vision, founded on the distinctively Christian values of service, hope, perseverance, forgiveness and justice which permeates all aspects of school life.
- The great emphasis on developing the 'whole' child within a Christian context enables pupils to thrive in their personal development, attitudes and behaviour, which are exemplary.
- In this secure environment, all groups of pupils make at least expected progress and generally achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2
- The spirituality of pupils is highly developed through the Christian ethos and the whole school emphasis on reflection, which is embedded in the curriculum, collective worship and everyday life at Spofforth Primary
- The family environment of the school promotes care for one another and for other people in the community and beyond.
- The high level of commitment and expertise governors bring to their role effectively supports school leaders in moving the school forward as a church school.

#### Areas to improve

- Provide focus in collective worship on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit to heighten pupils' awareness and develop their understanding of the Holy Trinity.

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

Christian values underpin all aspects of school life at Spofforth Primary. Posters with a Christian cross at the centre, surrounded by the school's Christian values, are prominently displayed in classrooms and around school, as well as on the school website and in documents. The school's learning principles logo incorporates the Christian values design at its centre and very effectively demonstrates how the school's ethos and work is founded on Christian values, which include service, hope, perseverance, forgiveness and justice. Pupils' spirituality is highly developed through the Christian ethos and the whole school emphasis on reflection, which is embedded in the curriculum, collective worship and everyday life at Spofforth. There is great emphasis on the development of the 'whole' child within a Christian context, which is appreciated by parents and articulated by school leaders and governors. This impacts extremely positively on pupils enabling them to thrive in their person development, attitudes and behaviour, which are exemplary. Pupils are encouraged to put the Christian values into action, through acknowledgement and information to parents via the 'Marvellous Me' app or 'Star of the Week' award presented in the celebration assembly. Following a recent collective worship focus on service and kindness a whole school initiative to 'fill my bucket' has caught on with great enthusiasm from the pupils. Every child has their own 'bucket' in their classroom and it is filled through good deeds and kind words from one pupil to another. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural develop is promoted through the schools' federation joint events, which include sporting events, residential visits and trips, together with some joint church services. For example, pupils from Spofforth and Follifoot Schools took part in a shared service, last academic year, in All Saints Church before Christmas, giving thanks for what they have and reflecting on the needs of others. The pupils brought gifts for local homeless people and placed them at the altar. Pupils are frequently and positively engaged in ethical and moral issues through supporting charities and service in the community. Pupils often initiate their own fundraising events for good causes, such as the Junior Diabetes Research Fund, as well as arranging a disability awareness and fundraising event, inspired by meeting the Paralympian Kadina Cox. Playtimes are stimulating and amicable, due to the excellent behaviour of pupils. There is space for reflection in the quiet garden. Staff members are positive role models for pupils and relationships across the school are extremely positive and attributed to the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils are effective learners within the school's Christian ethos, due to the focus on growth mindset, which promotes reflection and perseverance, supporting pupils' learning in all areas of the curriculum. All groups of pupils make at least expected progress and generally achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is generally in line or above national averages. For a very small number of pupils, where attendance is low, the school implements effective strategies to improve the situation. Pastoral support is provided for pupils who have prolonged absence due to illness, which includes letters from fellow pupils. Pupils from Christian and other religious backgrounds speak confidently about their beliefs and practices in front of other pupils, who listen respectfully. Religious education (RE) is taught by each class teacher and pupils' attainment is mainly in line with national expectation, with some pupils attaining above average. They learn predominantly about Christianity, but also about a range of other religions and they are able to make comparisons between religions. RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school and to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 1, when learning about Palm Sunday, reflected on how they would feel if they were in Jerusalem when Jesus rode into town on a donkey. Key Stage 2 pupils analysed information and made comparisons between Christian and Hindu wedding ceremonies, through appropriately differentiated activities. Parents say that their children talk about what they have been learning about in RE and collective worship at home. One parent remarked, 'My child asked me questions about God, which led to a very interesting conversation.' Pupils' knowledge of different faiths and cultures in national and global communities has been extended through their RE lessons, visits to churches, a synagogue, mosque and Bombay Stores in Bradford, together with follow-up from an exchange visit by a Spofforth teacher and a Shri Lankan teacher, who talked to pupils about her Hindu faith. This successfully addresses a development point from the last inspection.

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

Collective worship is greatly valued and central to the daily life of Spofforth School, where Christian values and Anglican traditions are promoted and affirmed. It inspires and impacts extremely positively on pupils' spiritual development, behaviour and attitudes. At the opening of collective worship a candle is lit and a pupil read out the following: 'Light is central to Christian life, as the candle burns away the thoughts and prayers from our worship burn before God', setting a spiritual atmosphere for worship. The school's Christian values are each given a half term's focus, over a two-year rolling programme and together with the inclusion of Bible stories provides opportunities for pupils to make links between the Christian values, Bible stories and their own lives. For example, a pupil commented, 'The story of David and Goliath tells you to have courage and perseverance, when things get difficult'. Collective worship is meticulously planned. The headteacher, staffs, governors, the licensed reader from All Saints Church and pupils contribute to shaping an annual plan for collective worship themes and sub-themes. which are based on the school's distinctively Christian values. This successfully addresses a development point from

the last inspection. Acts of worship typically include reflection, singing of worship songs, prayer, Bible stories or stories from other cultures or religions. The licensed reader leads worship in school fortnightly and the headteacher, teachers and the pupils themselves regularly lead collective worship, planning their input within the school's themes. Collective worship is regularly whole school with key stage or class assemblies each week. Worship themes are often followed up in classes, which promotes age appropriate discussion and understanding. Pupils know and enjoy singing a range of worship songs, some of which they sing superbly and skilfully in four parts. Pupils are engaged and enjoy being actively involved in worship, for example discussing with another child and making a collective response to the question, 'Who is your neighbour?' and the clear collective response, 'Anyone who needs our help'. This was linked to the Bible story of the Good Samaritan. Pupils are keen to volunteer to come to the front to help tell a modern-day version of this story during whole school worship. Pupils enjoy collective worship and one child remarked, 'I like being with everyone around me and being with God'. Reflection is embedded in collective worship and RE and is extremely effective at promoting spiritual growth. When talking about prayer one child described how he felt by saying, 'When I pray I feel warm inside, emotionally warm'. Each class has a prayer book and prayers written by pupils are added to this during the school day or at home. The Lord's prayer is included in the front of the prayer books, together with a child friendly explanation for parents to share with their child. Individual pupils take the prayer book home and families are invited to read the prayers or write a new one with their child. The prayers are then regularly offered, read by the child, during collective worship. Services are held in All Saints Church at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Pupils regularly plan and lead worship, such as at the Crib Service in All Saints Church, when they retell the Nativity story. The priest in charge of the benefice or the licensed reader officiate and close the service with a blessing. Parents and staff have commented on being moved by these services, particularly when receiving a blessing. Spofforth School is rooted in the local community, for example pupils took a lead role in an outdoor community carol service, with Bible readings, prayers and carols at Spofforth Castle at Christmas. Parents say they appreciate the church services and the weekly collective worship which they attend in good number. One parent commented about the Christmas service, 'It gives you time to stop and think in your busy life' and another said, 'It makes you proud of the school and of the children'. Pupils have some understanding of the Holy Trinity in Christianity, but this is not a regular feature in collective worship at present and so pupils' understanding of this is not as developed as it could be. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship includes governors and is thorough. Parents and pupils' views are regularly gathered and outcomes inform developments such as the inclusion of more drama.

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

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and, together with school leaders, staff and governors, promotes a shared Christian vision which permeates all areas of school life. The environment of the school is encouraging and compassionate, where pupils thrive both personally and academically. The headteacher has been in post at this school for the past six years, although there have been significant changes in leadership since the last inspection. Following the federation with Follifoot CE VC Primary School in 2015 the headteacher was appointed headteacher of both schools and there is now a shared governing body. The federation supports the long-term viability of both village church schools. Spofforth School has withstood many changes very successfully since this time and has continued to move forward as a church school. The governing body now formed is working very effectively and constructively, playing a significant role in the strategic development of the school as a church school. Governors have a thorough understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness through carrying out a rigorous schedule of monitoring and evaluation of all church school aspects. They do this through attendance at school worship, learning walks, pupil interviews and meetings with staff. Governors write thorough reports, which include challenging points for development, that are presented at full governing body meetings. RE and collective worship are well led and managed. School leaders have seized new opportunities for the benefit of pupils and staff, through collaboration with Follifoot and other schools. The two schools are joined in a learning partnership with two other federated village schools, which facilitates shared staff training, peer support and challenge, educational opportunities, and financial efficiencies which are taken on whole heartedly to enhance pupils' experience and learning. Spofforth contributes to and benefits from the long-standing membership of a Teaching School Alliance. The school is well supported by the diocese through courses and the headteacher and chair of governors attending termly briefings. There are strong links with All Saints Church with support from the priest in charge of the benefice and the licensed reader and through the head teacher's attendance at Church Council meetings to report on school matters. Parents comment very positively on the care and support school offers to pupils, especially during difficult times, such as bereavement. The school is committed to the local community, through supporting events such as Spofforth in Bloom, carol singing at the castle and the Harrogate homeless project, which gives opportunity for pupils to grow in confidence and take on responsibilities in the service of others, which they relish. Collective worship and RE are well led and managed.