

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

### Marwood Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Low Green, Great Ayton, Middlesbrough TS9 6NN	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>York</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Date of inspection	28 September 2017
Date of last inspection	November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Infant 121495
Headteacher	Celia Wilson
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

#### School context

Currently there are 51 pupils on roll who are mainly from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who are on free school meals or for whom English is an additional language is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for special needs support is below the national average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007. Since 2011, Marwood Infant School and Kirkby and Great Broughton Primary School have operated as a formal collaboration with a shared headteacher and separate governing bodies.

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

- This is a welcoming Christian family community with a strong spiritual and moral compass which serves its children and their families. This ensures its young pupils get the best possible foundation for life. As a result, pupils are confident and articulate and thrive, both academically and personally.
- In this nurturing environment, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The excellent partnership between church and school is exemplified by the inspirational headteacher and vicar. They are both pivotal in ensuring exemplary leadership at all levels and good governance within this thriving church school.
- Marwood's Christian vision and values strongly endorses their aims of 'Happy Friends Learning Together' within a spirit of love, forgiveness and friendship. Such values are known and lived out by the entire community.

#### Areas to improve

- Embed the gathering of pupil perspectives in evaluating collective worship and enable these young pupils to grow in confidence in leading worship.
- Enrich Marwood's outward looking global dimension of school life, enabling pupils to grow in their understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith.

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

Marwood's core Christian values of love, friendship and forgiveness within a nurturing community enable a strong sense of belonging and family which engenders 'Happy Friends Learning Together'. This is because this small, inclusive family is welcoming to pupils and parents. Relationships are excellent, with pupils eagerly showing great care and concern for one another. All policy and practice exemplifies such considerate attitudes. For example, the behaviour policy is underpinned by the Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation. Every person is treated as an individual with big and small achievements celebrated. Pupils love to earn a golden ribbon for demonstrating Christian values. Such values are constantly affirmed. Staff work tirelessly to create and maintain the Christian learning environment and, as a result attendance is high because pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. This is because the school works very closely with its families. This nurturing supports attainment and spiritual and social wellbeing. Transition work is strong, with some of the school's youngest pupils exceeding expectations. The school attributes this to adults and pupils supporting one another within an environment where love, forgiveness and friendship are paramount. Early intervention strategies where needed are employed by very skilled and experienced teachers in this dyslexia friendly school. In addition, parents say they feel blessed because their children attend Marwood. These young pupils make good progress, with excellent academic achievement for all groups of pupils. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been above average for the past three years, with reading a strength of this infant school. Christian values support learners' achievement, with the school continually providing a firm foundation for pupils to meet any future challenges. Pupils are inspired by their learning which includes forest school, learning to play a musical instrument as well as strong community links with Christ Church and village events. This leads to very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] provision.

Worship and religious education [RE] make very good contributions to pupils' SMSC development. For example, the awe and wonder of God's creation is fostered through the care of the school's three chickens. In addition, the age appropriate music chosen for worship helps supports the less able children so they too can thrive in worship. RE enjoys a high profile which 'opens their minds' and enables pupils to learn about different faiths and appreciate the cultural diversity of the UK. Pupils visit the mosque in Middlesbrough as well as the many Christian places of worship in the village of Great Ayton. These comprise the Roman Catholic Church, Methodist Chapel and Quaker Meeting House. The school has already identified the need to extend the global dimension of pupils' learning so that pupils grow in their understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith. Currently, they meet this through the work of Christian Aid and by their charity fundraising for those in distress in Romania. RE days help them learn about how Christmas and Easter is celebrated throughout the world. Pupils say they are excited by RE and 'learning about God and Jesus and love and how to cherish each other'. They like asking big questions, such as 'What does Amen mean?' and know that some questions can't be answered but they can 'look in the Bible'. They show good biblical knowledge for their young years, and know 'the Old Testament is about God and all the things about Jesus are in the New Testament.' They also go on to explain the Easter story in great detail, with the symbolism of Jesus sharing bread and wine with his disciples and recounting Judas' betrayal.

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

Inspiring and inclusive collective worship is integral to school life at Marwood, making a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Highly explicit Christian roots and values permeate every aspect of the vibrant life of this school community. Worship is no exception to this. This is because there are close links with nearby Christ Church through the vicar and chair of governors who leads weekly worship in school. The pattern of worship also includes celebrating festivals through the church year, such as Harvest, Christingle, Christmas and Easter. Pupils and parents enjoy these church services. Worship encourages charitable actions, such as supporting 'Love in a Box' children in distress and sharing Harvest gifts with the local community. The previous report recommended opportunities for reflection and the use of a spiritual garden which have all been addressed. Godly Play has also been introduced and the worship space has been enhanced with interactive displays which celebrate the school's core Christian values. Consequently, these young pupils are able to reflect and think quite deeply, writing their own prayers and using them in worship. In addition, pupils regularly offer spontaneous prayers in worship. They are familiar with biblical text and the teachings of Jesus, relating them to their own actions in terms of how they treat each other. The setting of The Lord's Prayer sung regularly in worship is one used at Christ Church and known by all the children. Pupils like singing '*we are your children*' as they comment that God is talking to us'. All staff lead worship, involving prayer and reflection, sharing the peace and using other Anglican traditions in worship. Pupils acknowledge 'the candle means God is with us in worship too'. They can explain The Holy Trinity as seeing God in three different ways. They speak of 'God as a holy Father who made everything. Jesus is the light of the world who died on the cross. The Holy Spirit is when we love each other.' Areas already identified by the school for future action include pupils leading worship as well as pupils evaluating worship on a more regular and formal basis. Year 2 pupils have been leading worship for some time. This year there has been a big emphasis with all three classes leading class worship once a term, leading to more ownership in church services under the guidance of teachers.

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

Undoubtedly, Marwood is a very special place where extraordinary support, encouragement and friendship dwells. Here there is constant growth and development within a loving and inclusive manner which richly defines the spirit and heart of the school. This is because 'the school is a real hub of Christian values' which engages everyone, including parents. It is 'a special experience in which to live and learn' which encourage staff to describe it as 'a family and home'. Marwood embraces everyone and all successfully thrive, both academically and personally. Parents and staff alike 'cannot speak highly enough of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who exemplifies the spirit and ethos of this caring school'. Governors too are very committed to the school where the wellbeing of all is a priority. They ensure the right people are in key posts. Christ Church's vicar and chair of governors is a prominent and welcome visitor to school. Consequently, pupils feel comfortable in church and in his presence. There are many Christians on the governing body, not just the foundation governors and many children attend Sunday school. Some pupils have been baptized. Governors regularly monitor RE and worship and both these key aspects of school life meet statutory requirements. The RE subject leader says she 'feels I've been ignited by teaching RE at Marwood'. She relishes its progressive enquiry approach and embraces new resources, such as 'Understanding Christianity' with its biblical focus. She feels her leadership is nurtured, with a newly qualified teacher using her example of an RE comments book. She goes on to say that monitoring this key subject is a joy. All staff feel professionally and spiritually fulfilled because of the very strong 'Marwood family'. Links with the diocese are very supportive, with the school benefitting from diocesan training and support for governance. Partnerships, especially with Kirkby and Great Broughton, and other local church schools ensure good practice is shared. Excellent community events include the annual maypole dancing, as well as shared experiences with local nurseries and the Little Fishes pre-school. The school regularly features in 'Spire' the parish magazine. Parents confirm they have made the right choice for their children, saying the school 'knows my child like I do'. Parents say their children have philosophical conversations with them at home, excitedly sharing their new found learning. They note their children are now teaching younger siblings important Christian values. They are amazed at the difference in their Reception aged children who have only been at school for a few weeks. They especially praise the love between children and the close bond which filters down from the teachers. This leaves everyone with many happy memories of the warmth of friendship experienced at Marwood.

SIAMS report September 2017 Marwood CE VC Infant School, Great Ayton TS9 6NN