



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

<b>Denby Free Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>	Church Street, Denby Village, Derby, DE5 8PH
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese/Methodist District</b>	<b>Derby</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Date/s of inspection	22 September 2016
Date of last inspection	16 November 2011
School's unique reference number	112881
Headteacher	Tracey Gill
Inspector's name and number	Alison Woodhouse 777

### School context

Denby Free Primary school is a smaller than average Primary school with 118 pupils on roll. The pupils are split into four, mixed aged classes. The school has two buildings, a main school building and a separate classroom housing the Y5 and Y6 pupils. The school is set in spacious grounds with access to a large field enhancing outdoor provision. The school has close links with St. Mary the Virgin church which is situated next to the school. The school is highly inclusive and caters well for disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds.

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

- A distinctively Christian foundation is confidently and proudly expressed by all stakeholders.
- The strong partnership with the parish successfully promotes a growing Christian community in the village.
- The significant work in the development of the Religious Education (RE) curriculum makes an excellent contribution to pupil's understanding and appreciation of the Christian faith.
- The school is a welcoming, Christian community where all pupils develop a sense of their own worth.

### Areas to improve

- Increase the pupils' knowledge and experience of other cultures and faith communities.
- Embed RE work from the agreed syllabus and 'understanding Christianity' so that learners are excited and challenged by RE lessons.

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

Christian values are embedded into the life and work of the school. They are explicitly expressed in all public documents and clearly understood by all members of the school family. Pupils speak very positively about their values and where they come from; one pupil commented that they were 'much happier now they knew about Christian values as it supported good behaviour in school.' Determination and commitment in enthusiastic pupils, supported by a professional and caring staff team ensures that pupils of all abilities do well; data indicates that they make good or better progress. The whole school community recognises the school's Christian ethos which has continued to grow and strengthen since the last inspection. Christian symbols adopted by each class, high quality displays of pupils' work in RE and collective worship reflect the school's explicit Christian character. Pupils are mature, confident and thoughtful. They behave extremely well and are eager to share ideas and skills. Relationships throughout the school are extremely strong and mutually supportive. Pupils trust and respect their teachers, saying that they always listen, help them and make their learning fun. This is commented upon very positively by parents and visitors. Children blossom through the impact of many strategies such as the successful nurture group and access to the 'cosmic room,' where children are supported to help develop their confidence and self-esteem. Evaluations from both parents and children describe a positive contribution to their well-being, with one parent commenting 'it has had a positive effect on our whole family.' The large school field enables pupils to explore the environment, and gives them opportunities to reflect on the beauty and wonder of the natural world, contributing to their spiritual development. Pupils have good levels of self-esteem and relate co-operatively towards others. They know that their views are considered and taken seriously. Parents talked enthusiastically about discussions relating to RE and worship at home, commenting that it 'challenges us as parents and as Christians.' They also spoke appreciatively about the strong links with St. Mary the Virgin church in terms of both celebrating the Anglican festivals and the warm welcome of coffee mornings. Such collaboration has enabled new networks to originate in the village. RE supports children very effectively in exploring spiritual, moral, cultural and social issues. As a result pupils fully respect diversity.

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

Collective Worship is central to school life and promotes Christian action in pupils' lives. Special collective worship allows the school community to reflect upon not only Anglican traditions but also enables reflection and prayer in difficult times. The impact of this is children living out Christian values which can be seen in their hospitality and generosity. Children are enthused by collective worship and stated 'it is always fun and we join in.' They also remarked on how they feel it makes them a better person, with one child commenting that 'It's relaxing, you come together and you understand the links from the Bible stories.' Prayer is important to the children; it is a regular feature of the school day and contributes very positively to spiritual development. Spaces for individual reflection, at other times in the school day, are well developed inside the school. These opportunities are appreciated by adults and children, parents mentioned their appreciation of a focal point in the school's entrance, a place where the school community can respond to and reflect upon current affairs. Staff also describe their appreciation of the way collective worship is organised and their ability to be flexible within this framework. They readily articulate how they derive spiritual input from collective worship, commenting that 'you can genuinely see it come out in everything the school does.' The impact is easily articulated by stakeholders as they talk positively about having time to reflect, share and continue important discussions at different points in the week. The programme for collective worship gives prominence to the Bible and teachings of Jesus and is planned to explore the value for the half term within a Christian context. Themes are also chosen which may be relevant to current affairs and learners' interests. A display about the Trinity has central prominence in the school reflecting the work and understanding of the pupils on this concept. The school's worship life is supported and enriched by local church members. A variety of gifted leaders, including the vicar, senior staff, visitors and teaching staff ensure that children remain excited, engaged and challenged by the messages. A series of themes incorporate the church calendar, key Christian values and, major festivals in a simple Anglican liturgical setting. The school collective worship team gathers learners' views and responses to worship. Their findings have prompted changes, such as varying the greeting and sending. The strong pupil voice is evidenced by the theme of 'peace' which they developed as 'peace week,' and linked it to anti-bullying. Currently they are extending their ideas for peace and prayer outside, developing a peace garden outside.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

There has been significant investment in RE since the last inspection and the school has a new subject leader who has shown passion and drive to move RE forward. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupil achievement. The quality of pupils' work can be seen in the many RE displays around school, as well as in their RE books. They also reflect the very good balance achieved between learning about and learning from religion. Pupils make good progress and the standards achieved are similar to those attained in other core subjects. Planning is thorough and staff say they feel very well supported by the co-ordinator. Strong links with the parish and the diocese ensure staff are supported in development, training and resources. There is a clear and comprehensive assessment in place for RE, tailored to the needs of each year group and therefore supporting differentiation in mixed aged classes. The overview for the RE curriculum based on the locally agreed syllabus shows the teaching of Christianity fulfils the Church of England's statement of entitlement for pupils. Christianity is at the core of the RE curriculum and the children's understanding and knowledge of Christian beliefs and practice is well developed. There is a strong emphasis on learning from RE which clearly impacts very positively on children's values and outlook on life. The study of faiths and traditions other than Christianity, extends their understanding of the diverse nature of the world and society in which they live. RE lessons observed show that teachers have a good grasp of subject knowledge and they engage children in creative and stimulating ways. A year 3/4 class were engaged in discussion about whether Harvest is a joyful time. The teacher skilfully used video clips and food to stimulate all children as they considered this question. In another lesson a year 5/ 6 class were considering big questions on creation and the natural world. RE was also age appropriate in EYFS and KS1 where relationships and fair-trade were being discussed. The RE curriculum clearly impacts positively on children and their learning. They were keen to continue their discussions and could recall previous RE lessons demonstrating how it often makes them think deeply about issues. Parents value the way RE enables their children to develop, one saying that 'my children enjoy being encouraged to think more deeply about their own Christian faith as well as learning about other faiths and traditions.'

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

The strong collegiate leadership and management team at Denby Free school celebrates their Christian vision and values and encourage the whole school community to do likewise. Vision and values are clearly set out in documentation and on the school's website. They are lived out in the day to day life of the school – in lessons, behaviour and relationships. They underpin the striving for excellence and strongly contribute to the distinctly Christian character of the school. Governors are very involved in the daily life of the school. Notable is the way members of staff and governors communicate regularly about all aspects of the school. The school's self-evaluation is sound and current plans for improvement in Christian distinctiveness reflect key development priorities. This is a tribute to the climate of shared leadership developed by the headteacher. The leader for RE and collective worship has made good use of diocesan training opportunities enhancing staff development across the school. The whole school has access to the bi-annual Church school s' conference developing staff at all levels, including future leaders. The parish church makes a significant contribution to school life. Sunday services make reference to the school and many of the congregation come into school to work with the children, strengthening this partnership. Parents commend the school's Christian ethos and actively support the school. They feel their children benefit greatly from the positive approach to behaviour and speak highly of the buddy system and the sense of hospitality instilled in the children. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met and development issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Overall, leadership and management is highly effective in maintaining and developing a distinctive and inclusive school with clear benefits for all stakeholders and the local community.

SIAMS report September 2016 Denby Free VA Primary school, Denby Village, Derby, DE58PH