

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Fleggburgh Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Road, Fleggburgh, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR29 3AG

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Norwich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Norfolk
Date of inspection	20 June 2017
Date of last inspection	18 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary 121081
Interim Executive Headteacher Head of School	Maureen Burns Ingrid Rounce
Inspector's name and number	David Bunkell 815

School context

Pupil numbers have increased over time, and currently 55 children attend the school, comprising two classes. Since the previous inspection the school has formed an informal partnership with another primary school, which is not a church school. The two schools share an executive headteacher, but otherwise are currently separate entities with their own governing bodies. The previous executive headteacher left at Easter, and an experienced interim headteacher has been appointed for two terms. The benefice which includes the nearby parish church has a vacancy; a new incumbent has recently been appointed, but is not yet in position.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Fleggburgh Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Pupils show great maturity in the way in which they are compassionate and trusting as they care for one another, frequently attributing their actions to Christian teaching and the Bible.
- Collective worship is central to life at the school. This has a major positive impact on the maintenance of Christian values, and is at the heart of all that is achieved.
- Leaders are planning extremely thoroughly and carefully to ensure the future viability and success of the school as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Make the process of monitoring and evaluating collective worship by pupils, staff and governors more structured and frequent to help make worship even more engaging and effective.
- Broaden the range of worship leaders to include those from other Christian traditions, to enhance pupils' understanding that Christianity is a world faith with many different styles of worship.
- Enhance pupils' spiritual journeys by reviewing the locations of areas for private prayer and reflection, and providing support for pupils in their understanding of how these areas might be used.

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

Christian values are central to the life of the school, and deeply embedded in all that takes place from day to day. The school's ethos is to encourage 'an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith' and to promote 'Christian values through the experiences it offers to all its learners'. In all this it is highly successful. Regardless of their ability, particular needs, beliefs or ethnicity, pupils are enabled to persevere and achieve. More than a quarter of current pupils have been diagnosed with special educational needs, but despite this, academic attainment in statutory tests is at least in line with, and often exceeds, national expectations. Pupils are keen to come to school, so attendance rates are high. Families benefit from the compassionate and forgiving approach that is taken for any who may find regular, punctual attendance difficult.

Pupils' behaviour and relationships are generally exemplary, and great tolerance and forbearance is evident on the very rare occasions when a pupil's behaviour to other children or adults is unsatisfactory. Exclusion is only considered as a very last resort when all other approaches have been tried, and this is seldom necessary.

Pupils have a particularly well-developed sense of spirituality, evident in the way in which they care for one another. They often refer in conversation to Christian values or make reference to Bible stories when talking about their behaviour. They show great insight into theological matters, for example when talking about Creation asking, 'If God created the world, who created God?' After thoughtful discussion they decided that perhaps God came into existence at the time of the 'big bang' and that this was all part of a greater plan.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development benefits from the focus on Christian values. Following a recent major fire in a London tower block, one pupil had realised that many children had lost all their possessions. He immediately brought a spare teddy bear to school, and with the help of staff instigated that all pupils would be encouraged to do the same, and that these would then be sent on to the victims of the fire.

Pupils recognise that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith, largely as a result of their learning in religious education (RE), one pupil referring to a cathedral in France, and another to visiting relatives in Germany and attending their church and trying to follow the service in an unfamiliar language. This level of understanding makes a positive contribution to the Christian character of the school.

Pupils are keen to raise money for charities, including international causes, and can express this in terms of their personal sacrificial giving. They enjoy learning in their RE lessons about other world faiths, and described the main facets of other religions with a high degree of confidence and respect. Pupils benefit from the fact that RE is a vital part of the curriculum, helping them to explore Christian values. RE is not only as a discrete subject but often has links to other subject areas, particularly at key festivals.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily collective worship (CW) is seen as an essential part of the school day, and attended by all in the school community. On Fridays, parents and carers are invited, and attend in large numbers. In conversation with parents they said that they go out of their way to ensure that they are able to attend regularly.

Although the name given to CW is 'assembly' it is entirely an act of worship, and not used for secular purposes. During the inspection pupils were seen to listen carefully, were keen to volunteer to participate in drama or to answer questions, they sang enthusiastically and responded eagerly to the Christian greeting and dismissal. The content was based on a Bible verse, and a Bible had been left open at the relevant page in the 'thinking together' corner, which also has a prayer tree, displaying prayers written by pupils. One of these prayers is chosen at each time of CW and read by pupils. On occasions a candle is lit for the duration of CW. Pupils were able to recall the significance of the seasons of the church's year and the main festivals, understanding the meaning of Easter and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Themes for CW are chosen that raise pupils' aspirations, and are either Christian values or British values with biblical links, and pupils are aware how often these values overlap. The current theme is 'respect', and throughout the day it was clear how much mutual respect there is between all people at the school. Pupils take full responsibility for their own conduct and express much of what they do in Christian terms. CW recognises the centrality of Jesus Christ, and focuses on the Trinitarian nature of Christianity. In discussion pupils showed a high degree of understanding, one saying that 'the Holy Spirit is the part of God inside us that guides our actions'. Pupils often write and say prayers, and see the value of prayer and reflection, when meeting collectively, but also as part of a personal relationship with God. When asking them what is distinctive about attending a church school, one reply was 'it helps us when we want to talk and pray to God.'

The recommendation from the last inspection to develop a prayer corner has been met. It is located in the multi-purpose hall, somewhat restricting its use for personal prayer or reflection, and there are no spaces in the extensive grounds set aside for this purpose. Pupils said that they would like to have places to be quiet and to reflect or pray. All pupils play a part in planning and leading CW by being placed in mixed-age 'worship teams', and during the inspection were seen to be confident, spontaneously taking part in dramatic scenarios. CW is led by most staff, and one session each week is led by an 'Open the Book' team from the local church. Pupils said how much they learn

from these sessions, making links between a recent CW based on a parable and relationships in school. The recently-retired incumbent played a full part in leading CW in the school and the church, and a lay reader runs a Bible-based school club each year during Advent and Lent. Currently no CW is routinely led by representatives of other Christian traditions, but a former member of staff is a Roman Catholic and had played a full part in leading CW, and two visitors from the diocesan link diocese of Papua New Guinea had spoken to pupils. The church has often been used for CW, but it is currently closed while it is re-roofed and has other essential maintenance. When this work is complete, plans are in place for it to be used again, and pupils expressed regret that they cannot use the church at the moment, showing the importance and value they attach to worshipping in church. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of CW is carried out informally. Governors sometimes write about CW they have attended, and the views of pupils are gathered from the school council, but not in a structured way. Members of staff contribute to the monitoring process by completing at length a CW log book while a colleague leads a session, but this does not necessarily inform future planning.

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

Senior staff and governors ensure that Christian values are central to every aspect of life at the school, living these out and promoting a vision rooted in Christianity. As a result, pupils repeatedly expressed their appreciation of all that adults in the school community do for them. The foundation governors arrange for every pupil to be presented with a Bible when they leave the school to help them continue their spiritual journeys.

Self-evaluation involves governors in addition to staff, and is perceptive and honest, enabling a constant striving to do even better, and to meet the spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of all pupils. Governors monitor the Christian distinctiveness of the school, the effectiveness of RE and its Christian development. An example of this was the recent decision to appoint an interim executive headteacher, with the vast experience of having previously led eight church schools, while carefully considering the future. Parents are highly supportive of all that the school does for their children, as shown by very positive responses to Ofsted's Parent View and in conversation during the inspection. Some pupils live in the village, but nearly half live beyond the catchment area. Some parents said that they drive past several other schools on their way, and had chosen this school particularly in the light of its Christian ethos, and the compassionate stance shown by all adults. Parents said that the school's Christian ethos has a very positive effect on their children's attitudes and behaviour. One parent said that they now say grace at home before meals because her son insisted on this at it always happens at school.

Partnership with the local church is strong, with the church seen very much as an extension of the school. Pupils proudly showed drawings they had made of the church. During a recent visit to the church pupils had looked at parish registers, including in some cases their own parents' weddings. A report about the school is sent to every church council meeting. Pupils' work is displayed in the church on occasions, for example decorating a window for a festival.

Partnership with the diocese is also strong, shown by many effective links. Pupils enjoy their regular visits to Norwich Cathedral, and the Bishop took part in a recent service to mark 150 years since the school was founded. Much use is made of training opportunities and general advice for staff and governors provided by the diocese. Governors said how useful the training attended had been and how it had enabled them to function even more effectively as governors.

Pupils described some cooking they had recently been able to do at the village public house, and talked about the Christmas cards that they send to every household in the village, which often leads to reciprocal contact with people who would otherwise have no direct association with the school.

At the time of the inspection, much thought was being given to the informal partnership with another school, recognising that the time is right to plan the next stage. The other school is not a church school, but was described as having a similar ethos and strong links with its own parish church, in another benefice. It was clear that all leaders are meticulously considering all options, never losing sight of the school's Christian distinctiveness or the wellbeing of every pupil. The leadership of worship and religious education is always a priority in development planning, and both these areas are well resourced. Statutory requirements for each are met.

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