

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter and St Paul Church of England VA Primary School

Church Street, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7BD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Suffolk
Date of inspection	23 May 2017
Date of last inspection	11 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	124771
Headteacher	Mark Carlyle
Inspector's name and number	Anna Reeder 659

School context

The school is currently slightly smaller than average with 183 pupils on roll. There is nursery provision followed by one form entry. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs is below the national average. The headteacher joined the school in September 2016. The school has had three different headteachers in the past three years, and there has been some staffing turbulence in key leadership posts. The deputy headteacher returned from maternity leave in 2016. One member of staff has continued as assistant headteacher for the current academic year. She is also the RE and collective worship co-ordinator.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter and St Paul as a Church of England school are good

- The leadership team, including governors, know the school well and are clear about how to be even better. They have built on the existing strengths of the school in a relatively short space of time and have a clear vision for the future which embeds Christian values in the development work that they do.
- The new head leads and inspires an enthusiastic and dedicated team of staff and governors committed to raising standards through a broad curriculum and promoting strong Christian values.
- Excellent displays, including religious education, and worship stations in every class, leave visitors in no doubt that this is a church school.

Areas to improve

- Develop assessment in religious education so that it is consistent with the new scheme of work and gives pupils clear indications of their next steps in learning.
- Develop further opportunities and experiences for pupils across the curriculum to engage with a variety of cultures and beliefs.
- Broaden the opportunities for prayer in the school day by developing an area where pupils can reflect quietly in the outdoor environment.

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

A distinctively Christian family atmosphere permeates the school and most members of the school community articulate this clearly, living out values such as forgiveness, respect, care and love. This impacts greatly on pupils' excellent behaviour, achievement and enjoyment. Distinct Christian values give the school a strong identity. Attainment and progress are strong; the school's progress figures for the last academic year were above national expectations in all areas and attendance is good. The school works closely with external agencies to support pupils with particular needs. This sits next to a clear focus from all the teaching team on pupils' personal development and well-being. They are very supportive of the few who struggle to cope in school, who are identified and are well supported by adults who demonstrate Christian values in action. As a result, pupils are safe, ready and able to learn. Relationships are supportive throughout the school and its nurturing element is based on core Christian values such as respect, forgiveness, justice, courage hope and cooperation. Those receiving pupil premium funding currently have higher attainment than those without in all core subjects. As the entrance display proclaims, 'We are all unique, beautiful and special to God.' Values undoubtedly shape the way pupils are building their own unique characters and abilities. "If you have respect for someone, you admire them and think that their ideas and opinions are important." The value of service is lived out through pupils willingly taking on responsibilities such as sports' leaders and monitors in worship. The focus reflection areas in every class support pupils' spiritual development well, reminding them of the presence of God in their school. Pupils enjoy interacting with these spaces and use the materials and prompts to help them think about how they act around school and at home. Some parents speak of the way in which Christian values learned in school have shaped the lives of their children. Relationships between all members of the school family are solid and there is a tangible sense of Christian love and care. Pupils are encouraged to follow the example of Christ in their behaviour, relationships and attitude. Parents talk about how their children are supportive of one another, and that parents are always welcomed in school, and can talk to the teachers. Pupils raise money for a wide range of charities during the school year, such as a topical charity relief project which explored the plight of refugees around the world. Through these projects pupils' understanding of communities from around the world has improved. Pupils show an understanding of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. RE makes a good contribution to pupils' knowledge of both Christianity and other world faiths, enabling them to compare beliefs and to understand the importance of faith and belief on people's daily lives, deeds and actions.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Daily worship is effective in encouraging a sense of community and shared values. Worship plays a central role in school life whether it takes place in the hall for whole school worship, in the adjacent local church or in the more intimate context of the classroom. No one withdraws from worship, which is distinctly Christian, and all come together, regardless of faith or belief, to worship God. Pupils questioned all spoke enthusiastically about worship and the experiences it brings. As witnessed on the day of inspection, pupils thoroughly enjoy visits from the Open-the-Book team, helping in the presentation. They say that that school assemblies are fun, capture interest and have a clear message from the Bible. Pupils have a good knowledge of gospel stories and they understand that Christians learn from Jesus' example and teachings and live their lives according to these. A well-focused policy and careful planning successfully intertwines biblical teaching with Christian values. Consequently, the programme effectively supports pupils in their understanding of Christian teaching about Jesus and the belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The impact on both pupils and adults is obvious as many reflect on how an act of worship has made a difference to their thinking. A regular mass is celebrated every half term in the local church situated directly opposite the school with the all the KS2 pupils. They speak knowledgeably about the symbolism in this service. A foundation governor also leads a 'mini mass' for the younger pupils. Over time, with the incumbent's support, pupils are becoming more involved and active in the service. As well as acting as altar servers and readers, pupils now prepare linked artwork, songs and poems to bring to mass for reflection after the gospel. It deepens understanding of the church's year as they explore the biblical foundation and symbolism of festivals. Both the school and the church community would like to find ways to encourage parents to join the school in worship; end of term services are well attended and there is a wish to extend this further. The WOW (worship our way) group which includes pupils nominated from each KS2 class meet on a weekly basis. They are currently supported by the worship leader to plan and prepare acts of worship. Their ideas are thoughtful but they are currently in need of adult support and guidance and need more experience for this to become an independent activity. Pupils appreciate the more intimate class based worship that takes place once a week, and the worship stations in every room which are actively used by the pupils to reflect in their own way through art, notes, asking questions they want to know more about or leaving their own opinions and ideas on the week's key themes. They are proud of their class reflection books which record what they have been thinking about. Reflection covers a wide variety of topics from what it is like to die to how you can support others who are sad. Prayer is central to worship and the school community comes together to quietly reflect, think and 'find space'. Leaders of worship all allow time for prayer and personal reflection. Grace is said or sung in classrooms before lunch either using a traditional version, or in a prayer created by individuals or groups of pupils. Pupils value the opportunity to reflect and pray in worship sessions and in their classrooms and they say they would like a quiet space to do this outside during playtimes too. The school has

established an ethos committee as part of its governance structure. Thoughtful, regular governor monitoring is recorded in a formal note of visit which is discussed in detail at the ethos committee with developmental action points that are shared and followed up. The WOW committee also evaluate worship independently every few weeks and the record is shared with the worship leader and the ethos committee. Monitoring has resulted in change such as new hymns to sing in worship sessions, and increasing the active role of all pupils' in mass.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Religious education in the school has changed significantly since the start of the new academic year, and is continuing to develop and strengthen as a subject. The enthusiastic subject leader, with diocesan support, has introduced a new scheme of work based on the Emmanuel Project. This has been welcomed by the teaching team who have become more confident and creative with the subject. 'It has changed everything for us.' The impact of the changes can already be seen in pupils' enthusiastic response to the subject and the development of their deeper interaction with the knowledge and understanding they gain in lessons. The pupils are not just learning about religion but learning from it and applying their learning to their own lives. 'Values help me to become a good person.' The subject leader works well with senior leaders, governors and the wider staff team to secure improvement in teaching and learning through her awareness of current diocesan and national initiatives. This has enabled professional development opportunities and well-placed support from the diocesan advisor to ensure that learners make good progress. Consequently, RE is well planned and teaching is good with pupils being well supported to develop their skills, experience and understanding of religion. Year 2 were thinking about what it means to follow Jesus 2000 years on from the original disciples. Focused questioning drew out a range of responses. 'We can follow Jesus because He is still with us.' 'He's the light of the world, so He's with us all the time.' A long roll of coloured paper was unrolled to reveal a beautiful pair of glittery footprints and the children added their own during the lesson with their own reflections about what it means to follow someone. In Year 5 the children were exploring the significance of the Eucharist to Christians. They had explored various artworks of the Last Supper as well as related Bible texts, and were immersed in a freeze frame activity that was enabling them to explore the disciple's feelings and responses at different points of the Passover meal with Jesus. Existing assessment does not currently provide children with their next steps in learning for RE. Work to address this has recently started. The school is aware now that it needs to alter its assessment practices to reflect the changes in the style of teaching and has just started this journey. The subject leader has introduced class 'scrapbooks' which generate evidence of learning outcomes through activities such as discussions, interactive displays, photos of the children acting, and short writing tasks. Attainment is high, at least in line with national expectations, and the curriculum is wide and varied. Self- evaluation processes enable the staff leaders to have an accurate understanding of where further improvements are needed. These are encapsulated in a good quality action plan.

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

The headteacher has built on and developed a strong team vision in a short period of time. The leadership team talk openly and with passion about what drives them and what their core values are. The headteacher and the leadership team believe that everyone has a role to play in the life of the school, and that the gifts that everyone brings to the school community every day should be celebrated. Development of the community is based on the Christian principles of love, service and tolerance. Self- evaluation is perceptive and the school has a good understanding of its distinctiveness as a church school and its academic performance. The school is outward looking and thoughtful discussion has begun to take place about ensuring that the school remains effective and continues to work closely with other church schools in the area and to promote and encourage pathways for succession planning. This is still very much in the developmental stage. The governors' ethos committee is engaged, well-informed and active in school and holds the leaders to account for their effectiveness as a church school. Foundation governors work faithfully and committedly in their role of monitoring and evaluating the practices which enhance the Christian distinctiveness of the school such as examining how the Church of England's Vision for Education document could lead future school development planning. Their findings are shared, and the school has developed ways of formalising their visits to ensure the focus is clear and more rigorous, to further drive standards. The clergy and other members of the church are known by the children. This strengthens the valued links between school and church. During Christian festivals worship takes place in the church and parents value these opportunities to be involved. Leadership of collective worship and RE have been given a high priority because they are seen by the leadership team as key to developing the school as a church school. This has enabled improvements and built on existing good practice. Parents are supportive and appreciative of the school's work in caring, nurturing and educating their children. The school has good involvement in the local community. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They are well informed and, with staff, access relevant diocesan training which guides school improvement and clarifies the importance of being part of a church school. The developmental points from the previous inspection have been addressed, but some work is on-going. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.