

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sporle Church of England Primary Academy

82 The Street Sporle King's Lynn PE32 2DR	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Norwich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 March 2016
Name of multi-academy trust	DNEAT
Date of inspection	14 November 2016
Date of last inspection	6 July 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 142465
Executive Headteacher	Kelly Scott
Inspector's name and number	Pat George 845

School context

Sporle is a small primary school serving the village and surrounding area with a rising number of pupils from the nearby town. This adds another dimension to the community. The school has been part of a three school federation since 2013 with one governing body. The leadership team of the federation has had significant changes over the last two years with a new headteacher, deputy and lead teacher for the school. It has a higher than national proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding and a small number of children from other ethnic backgrounds. There is currently no incumbent.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sporle Church of England Academy as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian vision of the leadership team is explicit in the daily life of the school. Being part of the federation has strengthened the delivery of this vision.
- Christian values underpin all areas of school life and this has enabled the development of an inclusive, caring, supportive community.
- Collective worship impacts positively on pupil personal development contributing to the strength of the school as a church school, as reflected in pupil's positive relationships and growing understanding of the purpose of prayer.

Areas to improve

- Broaden pupil understanding of the role and purpose of prayer by providing more opportunities for personal prayer through the development of prayer/reflective spaces around the school, enabling pupils to understand more fully how prayer forms part of their personal spiritual journey.
- Continue to develop the pupil role in collective worship through encouraging more independence in planning, delivering, monitoring and evaluating worship ensuring they have a greater voice in developing worship including a formal link to the governing body.
- Further enhance pupil awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural, world-wide faith and of the difference and diversity within the church and other Christian denominations so pupils have an improved understanding of their place in the wider Christian family

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

Sporle has a clear, distinctive Christian character that has been enhanced by the recent review of the school values. The motto is Everyone Safe, Everyone happy and Everyone learning. This is delivered through a set of core values: being respectful, responsible, courageous, thankful and hopeful. The values have a high profile around the school and the distinctive Christian character is evident on the website and through displays and objects around the school. These values have contributed greatly to the development of the school as an inclusive, caring community as they were chosen by the whole school community including governors and parents.

Pupils readily explain how the core values link to the motto. For example respect means “sharing, taking care of everyone and being together”. Each class has a reflection area and calm spaces are available around the school. Pupils spoke of the impact of the values on behaviour and how they help all pupils know how to get on with each other. The values are evident in the positive relationships in school and the support and care for vulnerable pupils. Although raw data trends are unreliable due small cohorts, it is evident from analysis of pupil records that attainment has improved over the last year and school is working effectively to improve attendance. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel their school is special because “it is a church school and we go to church a lot”. These visits support their understanding of the church year and the importance of Anglican traditions.

Pupils are positive about religious education (RE) and can speak about learning about the Bible, the Gospels and Old Testament, and can link this to Bible stories in worship. They enjoy about learning about other faiths and could discuss similarities with Christianity. They are clear that other faiths need to be respected. School is implementing the Understanding Christianity programme which is beginning to deepen pupil understanding of core Christian beliefs. They value discussion time in RE and feel it helps them understand different points of view. RE and the values support pupil spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). Links between values and the curriculum are beginning to be developed, for example a display of work by the top class on the life of Elizabeth Fry linked to values for life. However, these links and links with RE and the broader curriculum are not yet school wide nor sufficiently explicit to have a whole school impact. Leaders have already identified this as an area for development. Pupils show a basic understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world wide faith, limited to awareness that there are Christians in other countries. Knowledge and awareness of difference and diversity within Christianity in Britain are less developed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is an integral part of the school day and is held first thing in the morning one day a week. Worship is planned by the federation lead using the Values for Life programme supplemented by the liturgical year and Christian festivals. It is led by a variety of adults, including from the local churches. Pupils feel that worship is a time for them to talk about God and Jesus, for them to be together and share their thoughts. Pupil involvement in planning and leading worship is developing and they currently lead specific parts of worship. For example, the message about the Trinity at the beginning of worship is delivered by the PATHs (PHSE programme) pupils of the day and pupils act out parts of the story. Spirituality is enhanced through music, focus objects and a liturgical greeting. Pupil understanding and awareness of the Trinity is supported through the use of three objects and a prayer and response. Pupils state that the Bible is the word of God, Jesus; “we think of him when we look at the cross” and know that the lighting of the candle represents the Holy spirit. Pupils have an age appropriate understanding of the Trinity supported by worship; they spoke of the Holy Spirit being Jesus coming back and always there for you. The profile of the Trinity is also evident on display tables in other parts of the school. Pupils are engaged, respectful, and keen to contribute and share their thoughts through individual answers to questions and through the use of talking partners. Staff effectively model and support this part of worship. Pupils leave with a message that links to the value and story for that day.

Pupils readily make links between values, Bible stories and worship, being aware that the message from worship helps them behave and learn. Older pupils referred to work in RE on Jesus as the Messiah, and link the meaning of this to worship. Pupil understanding of reasons why people pray is well developed: to talk to God, to calm down, ask for help, saying sorry, and thank you and to remember. They speak of the reflection areas in their classrooms as other places to pray and say that “God listens to what you say wherever you are”. Pupils see prayer as important in their lives, linking saying prayers in worship with church and home “I pray before I go to bed” They know about the calm spaces but their use as prayer/reflection spaces is underdeveloped and therefore their impact on pupil spiritual development is limited.

Monitoring of collective worship is undertaken by the worship lead and governors and the governing body have recently surveyed pupils to obtain their views on worship. However, pupil direct involvement with monitoring and evaluating worship on a regular basis is not yet established. Evaluation does not always focus on the impact of worship on the daily lives of the pupils. Pupils would welcome opportunities to be more involved with planning and delivering complete acts of worship.

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

The executive headteacher and the federation deputy provide strong leadership for the school, having developed a clearly articulated vision based on Christian values. Their firm focus on improving behaviours for learning and raising standards is delivered by a federation and whole school commitment to and consistency in acting out those values. The federation vision statement supports this, "through our Christian values we are an inclusive federation which strives to: build lasting memories, increase life opportunities, forge harmony not just happiness, promote and develop relationships, embrace failure as well as success and develop resilience to support our pupils to face an ever changing future". The governing body decisions to federate and convert to academy with the Diocese of Norwich Educational Academy Trust have enabled the school to grow and develop as an inclusive, distinctive Christian church school. This together with the appointment of an executive head and federation deputy has increased significantly the school's capacity to sustain improvement.

Governors were involved in developing the values and vision. This has led to monitoring and evaluation which is based on a clear focused single change plan which includes a section on Christian distinctiveness. This enables senior leaders and governors to effectively target priorities and monitor and evaluate the impact of actions. Governors recently conducted a surgery approach to seeking pupil views on worship and the school as church school. The outcomes of this have resulted in actions across the federation to improve pupil experiences. There is no regular formal mechanism for pupils to feed back to the governing body. The governing body doesn't currently have a group which focuses on Christian distinctiveness, although governors regularly attend worship and carry out formal monitoring and evaluation. The school takes account of pupil voice including on matters relating to Christian character through the school council and regularly consults with parents.

Parents endorse the sustained improvements and are very supportive of the school and talk positively about the support school provides for families and more vulnerable pupils. They are aware of the revised values and some speak of joining their children for church services. They value the school's links with the church even if they are non-church goers. There is currently no incumbent but one has been appointed taking up post in January 2017. The rural dean has been providing support for the school including leading worship and is very positive about the capacity for the school to develop and grow as a distinctive church school. Acts of worship take place in the church including the major Christian festivals and a Remembrance Day service. Pupils spoke about attending the service and could explain its significance. Pupils' understanding of the wider church, the message from Bible stories and the Trinity have been enhanced by their participation in Cathedral days.

RE and collective worship are well led across the federation. Monitoring has identified that the links between RE, worship and pupil spirituality are less developed than in other areas of SMSC and therefore this is an area for development.. Both leaders have accessed diocesan training to develop their knowledge and skills including the Understanding Christianity programme and are now developing staff expertise across the federation. The relationship with the diocese is enhanced by the effective support for development of Christian distinctiveness provided by the school diocesan support officer. The school and federation work closely with other diocesan schools, in particular other academies. Strong leadership has ensured all the areas for development from the last inspection have been fully met.

SIAMS report November 2016 Sporle Church of England primary Academy Sporle PE32 2DR