

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

### Flitcham Church Of England Primary Academy

Church Road, Flitcham, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE31 6BU	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Norwich</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	July 2014
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust
Date of inspection	12 July 2017
Date of last inspection	5 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 141050
Executive Principal	Jane Gardener
Inspector's name and number	Jean Johnson 608

#### School context

This is a smaller than average rural primary school with 74 pupils on roll. Pupils are predominantly of White British origin, and come from Flitcham, surrounding villages and further afield. The school joined the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) in 2014. The executive headteacher has been in post since September 2016 when the school began working in partnership with a nearby rural church primary school of similar size. The school is situated on the Sandringham Estate, close to the local parish church. The school was graded 'good' by Ofsted at its April 2017 inspection.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Flitcham Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian character is celebrated by all, and has a recognisable impact on behaviour, attitudes and relationships within the school.
- The strong and effective partnership between the school and local church consistently promotes the school's Christian character and permeates the life of the school.
- Strong leadership and links with the Diocese ensure that the school continues to develop its effectiveness as a church school.

#### Areas to improve

- Further develop the teaching of religious education (RE) and include more creative approaches to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged to reflect fully on how their learning relates to their own ideas and lives.
- Develop and moderate the assessment of RE to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress in all areas of the subject.
- Increase pupils' involvement in daily collective worship by giving them responsibility for planning acts of worship.

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

Christian values, for example hope, forgiveness, compassion, truthfulness and love are firmly embedded in the everyday life of the school and have a significant impact on behaviour and attitudes. Displays throughout the school promote these values and celebrate pupils' understanding of and response to them. The ethos committee, made up of pupils, staff and representatives of the local church, has been responsible for selecting key values to focus on this year. These values are lived out and exemplified in the school's approach to challenging situations. Parents describe the school as a 'close knit family' where children grow in confidence and their individual needs and circumstances are exceptionally well provided for. They describe how children are caring and considerate with, for example, older children looking after younger ones, and attribute this to the Christian character of the school. They say that children are encouraged and supported to do their best and, as a result, the percentage of pupils reaching expected levels and above during their time at the school is above national average. Attendance is also generally above national averages. Pupils explain the good relationships in school in the context of the parable of the Good Samaritan which tells them that they should try to care for everyone no matter what they look like or do. They enjoy celebrating each other's achievements, both academic and related to the school's Christian values, in the weekly sharing assembly. Parents also value the opportunity to be part of these celebrations and see this as reinforcing the school's Christian ethos.

Pupils suggest and help to organise events to raise money for a range of charities, including ones that have particular relevance to themselves or their families. They see this as part of a Christian mission to give hope to others. Reflection areas both inside and in the school grounds provide quiet spaces where pupils say they go to think, pray and reflect on issues in their lives. RE is given a high priority within the school, making a valuable contribution to the Christian character of the school as well as reflecting the importance of recognising personal faith and belief in a church school. Pupils see this as a time when they learn more about Christianity and its relevance to them, as well as having opportunities to compare the beliefs and traditions of Christianity to those of other faiths. Visits to other places of worship as well as visitors to school, widen pupils' understanding of other cultures and traditions and enable them to see Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Parents feel that these experiences enable their children to respect diversity.

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

All staff lead collective worship which is seen as an important part of the school day. In addition, the local incumbent regularly leads worship both in school and the local church where parents and pupils take part in a Eucharist service each half term. Major festivals in the Christian year, for example Pentecost and Ash Wednesday, are also celebrated in the church, as well as the ancient tradition of Clypping when pupils, staff and families join hands to form a ring around the church. Parents and pupils see this as symbolising the inclusive ethos of both the school and the church. These experiences enable all members of the school community to develop a deep spiritual connection to events in the church's year. Pupils talk about how they ask the local incumbent 'big questions' such as, 'Why are some people bad?' and 'Who are God's parents?' showing their curiosity and willingness to engage with challenging questions of faith. This close partnership between the school and church makes a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of aspects of Christian belief and enables them to gain a good knowledge of local Anglican traditions and practice. Christian values, selected by the ethos committee, form the focus for worship, with a different value being explored each half term. Pupils talk about how reflecting on these values affects their lives. One pupil said that because Jesus forgave the disciple who betrayed him, they all try to be kind to people and forgive them if they do something wrong. Visits by the Open the Book team, BJ Puppets and GenR8 add to the variety of presentations that pupils experience, ensuring that worship is engaging and inspirational.

Daily worship starts with the lighting of a candle which pupils say reminds them that 'Jesus brings light to the world and washes away sins.' They share their own prayers in worship and at other times in the day, and talk confidently about praying to God for themselves and others. These prayers are displayed on the prayer tree in the reflection space in the hall together with the individual thoughts that they want to share with God. Their thoughts are often followed up in discussions. Pupils leave worship reflecting on the messages heard, motivated and ready for the day ahead.

Pupils have developed a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through clear teaching in collective worship and RE. The pupil worship team takes day to day responsibility for leading aspects of worship, including prayer and reading out Bible stories, increasing their involvement in it. A group of pupils regularly evaluates worship and have, for example, suggested changing one of the hall windows into a stained glass window to make their worship space more like a church. Plans are currently in place for this to happen, with a design being finalised based on pupils' ideas. Governors attend worship each week and monitor its impact on behaviour and attitudes through discussions with pupils. Pupils play a major role in planning and leading special services, and would welcome more opportunities to fully plan daily worship in school.

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

All teachers teach RE and weekly lessons ensure that it has a high profile within the school, with topics in RE often used as the themes for writing in English. Planning for RE is based on the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus, with teachers selecting key questions for consideration each half term. Pupils respond well to this enquiry based approach and are keen to express their views as well as ask questions themselves. Effective questioning ensures that meaningful links are made to the Christian values that are promoted in worship as planning ensures that they are regularly introduced and placed in a context in discussion. An example of this was when younger children were asked to think about what God would want them to hope for in relation to the creation story. Engaging and meaningful tasks were observed, allowing pupils to discuss and compare their understanding and interpretation of the Lord's Prayer before putting it into the context of their own lives. They say that exploring stories from the Bible in RE has encouraged them to see the good in things rather than focusing on the negative. Where available, sensitive support from additional adults enables pupils with specific needs to participate fully in the lesson and to demonstrate their understanding in a range of ways not dependent on literacy skills.

The school uses a range of artefacts to give pupils practical experiences of other faith traditions and good use is made of virtual resources to enable children to explore and ask questions about other faiths and places of worship. Recorded work shows differentiated outcomes and generally good standards of attainment throughout the school, particularly in relation to understanding key concepts. End of unit assessment criteria are used to assess pupils' learning and inform future planning. The executive head teacher takes overall responsibility for RE and is supported in this by the head of school. She has completed training which has enabled her to introduce the Understanding Christianity materials to staff this year. Teachers' use of this new resource has enabled pupils to gain a more in depth reflective understanding of Christianity. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and pupil outcomes has enabled the subject leader to evaluate the impact of the introduction of these new resources and their place in the curriculum and plan future developments. She has drawn up plans to monitor impact in more depth next year as the curriculum becomes embedded.

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

All leaders articulate and promote a vision for the school based on clearly stated Christian ethics and principles. They see the school as a place where all children learn and grow in an environment rooted in and informed by Christian values. They embrace the Christian aims of DNEAT and are proud of the school's Christian foundation. They see their decision to become part of DNEAT, together with working in partnership with another church school, as supporting their vision for the long term sustainability and growth of the school as a church school serving its community. The school's motto 'Live together, learn together, play together' is explained with explicit references to the school's Christian ethos and values which are supported by all stakeholders. Parents and members of the school community recognise the positive impact the school's Christian values have on pupils' academic and social development. Each child is seen as a unique individual, supported to be the best they can be within the supportive, nurturing Christian family of the school.

Leaders identified key areas for development to the school's Christian distinctiveness at the start of the school year, and these have been detailed in the school development plan. This has included a renewed focus on the teaching of RE to improve overall standards in the subject. Leaders, including governors, as well as staff, have accessed support and training from the diocese, and worked with other church schools to bring about improvements to provision and practice in RE. The effective use of new resources and focused planning is increasing pupil engagement in the subject leading to improving outcomes. Governors are proactive in ensuring that the school's ethos and values are promoted. They monitor planning and collective worship, listen to pupils' views and hold termly parent forums to monitor parents' perception of the school. They have been instrumental in opening up class worship to a wider group of parents, and are supporting pupils in their vision for a stained-glass window to enhance the worship space in the hall.

The incumbent is a frequent visitor to the school and his presence makes a recognisable contribution to ensuring that the school's Anglican foundation is celebrated and promoted. Parents acknowledge the close partnership that the school has with the local church and appreciate the opportunities this gives their children to experience Christianity in action. Pupils' work is displayed in the church, and pupils from the school attend Sunday School in the benefice and sing in the church choir. The parish presents Bibles to Year 6 pupils during the annual leavers' service.