



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Sutton CofE VC Infant School

Denise Close,
Off Laxfield Road,
Norwich,
NR12 9QP

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 13 October 2015

Date of last inspection: 7 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 121058

Headteacher: Jo Nutbeam

Inspector's name and number: Stephen Green 809

School context

This small rural school is situated in the heart of the Norfolk Broads. Working in partnership with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the RSPB, the school has constructed a large wildlife to help pupils to appreciate their rural environment. The school has 52 pupils on roll. Since the last inspection the school has federated with two other church schools and has appointed a new executive headteacher, a new lead teacher and a newly qualified teacher. The Curate, who is the Bishops' Appointed Foundation School Governor, has a leading role within the school. She will be leaving the Parish in 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sutton as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian foundation and its commitment to its Christian values are very evident to all pupils and visitors to the school.
- The commitment of the whole team in embedding the Christian vision and values across every aspect of school life has enabled rapid improvements in both attendance and achievement.
- Membership of the Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools is delivering significant opportunities for both pupils and staff, and enabling all three schools to develop their Christian distinctiveness by sharing their strengths and learning from each other's experiences.

Areas to improve

- The school needs to develop pupils' broader views of their place in the world, by improving their understanding of Christianity by looking at the Christian faith as it is celebrated in other cultures, and by developing their understanding of Judaism.
- The school needs to develop the link between foundation governors and the subject co-ordinators for religious education (RE) and collective worship (CW) so that they can have a more active role in strategic subject planning.

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

The school's Christian foundation and values are made very clear for pupils, parents and visitors and can be seen in the way pupils behave towards each other. Pupils make it very clear that they respect and get on well with each other. They undoubtedly like their school and are proud of their achievements there. The school vision specifically states that the school aims to provide a Christian ethos relevant to all areas of school life in a happy and caring environment in which all children feel safe. They aim to model and nurture good social, physical and spiritual development. The school, in common with the rest of the federation, has adopted the Values for Life scheme and follows this as a way of implementing these aims. Pupils have a thorough knowledge of the school's values, and a good understanding of both the current focus (hope) and the focus from last term (courage). They were able to give specific examples of how the theme of hope is being developed in CW and in class follow-up. Pupils find RE interesting and see school leaders as approachable and friendly. They have a polite and friendly attitude towards all visitors to their school, and spoke of foundation governors and local clergy as being regular visitors. The hall is used for CW in the school, and displays clearly demonstrate their commitment to Christianity and make a good focus for worship. Pupils' academic results and attendance have both improved considerably and are now better than the national average. Parents were keen to praise the staff and their Christian values. One parent stated that they 'are probably why we are now getting such good results.' They spoke enthusiastically of the impact the school's Christian values are having upon their children's lives outside school. One said that 'it comes out in everything they do. They are very caring.' Another described the school as one extended family. School leaders have focussed upon improving communications, and the relationship between staff and parents is now very strong. Pupils have a well-developed spirituality and see prayer as a natural and important part of their lives. The school teaches pupils to appreciate the world God has given them in many ways, including developing and using a very extensive wildlife area. An outdoor carol concert was held here last winter, and pupils spoke of being able to enjoy the peace they find there. The impact of the school's Christian values can be seen in the way they have offered the use of this excellent facility to other community groups. There are close links with the local Anglican church and Methodist Chapel, and their leaders are regular and valued visitors. Pupils have a good understanding of Christianity, although their views of Christianity and their place in the world are focussed very much upon what they have seen and experienced in their own community, and their understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith needs to be developed further. Pupils enjoy RE and it has an important role in the curriculum. Pupils demonstrate the impact of their CW in their excellent relationships with each other and with adults in the school, and in the impressive range of charitable work they do. The school has recently raised money for a number of charities, including, at the children's instigation, the Nepalese earthquake appeal. Pupils enjoy attending the local church, which they do regularly, and see the clergy as being approachable members of the school staff.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

CW is used very effectively by the school to explain and reinforce its Christian values and ethos. Themes introduced here are then followed up in classes. Worship is inclusive and

inspirational, and is strongly supported by all groups within the school community. A comprehensive termly plan is produced, and circulated to those who are leading worship. These leaders regularly include representatives of the local Anglican and Methodist churches. The programme for CW has an appropriate Biblical basis, and focuses upon the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Pupils enjoy participating in worship, and with foundation governors have been given a regular role in monitoring, their feedback being collected in a book of reflections. The children have many opportunities to develop their own spirituality, and prayer is very important to many of them. There is a prayer cross in the hall, where worship usually takes place, as well as a prayer space for private reflection and prayer in the centre of the school, and a prayer tree in the entrance foyer. The school prayer, which is regularly revisited in worship, was written by the children. Acts of worship frequently end in a quiet moment for personal reflection. Pupils have an excellent understanding of God as Father Son and Holy Spirit, and this is reinforced through displays and in RE. Worship, which is also regularly held in the village church, is open to and well supported by parents. They are also welcomed into two acts of worship each week in the school. Parents speak of school leaders being very approachable and willing to listen, and gave examples of changes that have been made as a result of their comments and ideas. A recent parent perception survey demonstrated clear support from the parent body for the pattern and content of worship and RE. Staff and worship leaders are regularly reminded of the need to be aware of links between CW, RE and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC). Displays around the school reinforce this, although their language is aimed more at adults than children.

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

This school is making many rapid and sustained improvements. Academic results, behaviour, attendance and relationships with parents and the wider community have all been shown to have improved considerably since the last inspection. In that time the school has become part of a federation of church schools, which has allowed the governors to appoint both a headteacher and a lead teacher who share their Christian vision. Parents and governors are keen to recognise the contribution that these two people are making to school improvement. Governors are very involved, and take a wide strategic view of the school. They have a regular role in monitoring Christian distinctiveness, and are frequently asked to target their observations and then evaluate what they see (e.g. an SMSC-focussed learning walk). They are constantly looking for ways to improve it still further, and to ensure recent developments are maintained. The federation allows this small school to have subject leaders (including RE), who can take a realistic share in school development, and in doing so can develop their own skills as future leaders of church schools. By working across all three schools they can develop their professional skills whilst also bringing the strengths of each school to bear to support other schools in the federation. This is a good example of how the school's Christian ethos of caring and support is making a real impact. The school also works with other schools in the cluster, and by doing so has been able to jointly fund a nurture group, demonstrating the school's culture of caring this time for the more vulnerable. Strategic planning involves different groups within the school community, and governors have a valued role in monitoring and evaluating Christian distinctiveness. However, governors' roles have not yet been fully developed as they do not yet routinely discuss action planning with RE and CW subject co-ordinators. Leadership of CW and RE are given a very high priority, and this has led to very effective practice in both. Planning is shared across the federation and the RE and CW co-ordinators work in all three schools. The RE co-ordinator actively supports less experienced staff. The close and mutually supportive relationship with the church is demonstrated by the involvement of local clergy in all levels of school leadership and life, and in contributions the school makes to the life of the church. Many examples were seen of parents supporting learning, sometimes at the request of the staff and sometimes of their own volition. On one occasion a grandparent told the school that she knew they were having a focus on reading and asked if she could help by listening to less able children reading. The school developed that enthusiasm and she is now a volunteer

librarian. Groups of parents constructed the wildlife area and maintain it, frequently at weekends. The school maintains a notice board in the church and has a regular paragraph in the parish magazine and a link on their website to 'Pews News'. One of the strengths of the school's leadership is their willingness to keep looking for further ways to strengthen what they have, even though it is obvious that what they have achieved is of a very high standard already. Their commitment to use their strengths, and the experience they have gained in improving the school to support other schools in the federation is creditable and evidence of school leaders' own Christian vision.

SIAMS report October 2015 Sutton CEVC Infants NR12 9QP