

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

### Erpingham Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

School Rd Erpingham NR11 7QY	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	Norwich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Norfolk
Date of inspection	6 July 2017
Date of last inspection	9 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 121036
Executive Headteacher	Angie Hamilton
Inspector's name and number	Pat George 845

#### School context

Erpingham is a very small rural primary school. In April 2016 it federated with another very small primary school. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2016. It has 54 pupils on roll with 20 of these flexi-schooled, being home educated 2 days a week. The school has a high proportion of pupils with additional needs and low numbers of disadvantaged pupils. The majority of pupils come from outside the catchment area and include children from other Christian denominations and other faiths.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Erpingham Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Positive relationships based on the distinctively Christian values of love, friendship, courage and respect, are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school. Adults provide good role models in living out the values.
- Leaders are clear about the impact of the vision and values on pupils and school life. This enables the school to be highly effective in meeting the needs of individual children.
- Worship is linked to Christian values and learners respond and engage well. They are aware of the central place of God and Jesus in worship.

#### Areas to improve

- To broaden, at an age-appropriate level, pupil understanding of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit so that the characteristics of each part of the Trinity are understood and its place in worship more prominent.
- To continue to develop the use of reflection spaces both inside and outside so that pupil personal spirituality can be enhanced and they have opportunities, if they wish, to be calm, reflect and pray at different times of the day.
- To continue to develop involvement in worship of pupils and other Christian denominations, including monitoring and evaluation of the impact of worship and Christian values, providing opportunities for pupils to feed back more formally to the governing body.

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

The whole school community can articulate the impact of the distinctive Christian values which are deeply embedded and explicit in the daily life of the school. Their high profile is clear on the school website and around the school. A Trinity display reflects recent family learning, and values displays are in each classroom as well as in corridors. The Christian character makes a positive contribution to all learners' personal wellbeing as well as academic progress. The language of values is used consistently to support positive behaviour. Pupils can nominate others who exemplify the current value and these are celebrated in fortnightly values worship. They speak of values helping you to make good choices and can clearly articulate the core values of love, friendship, courage and respect. School is developing clearer links between the well-established Forest Schools learning and the Christian values. Pupils contribute to school life through the school council and the outside reflection area in the quiet space is being developed as a result of pupil input.

Parents are very positive about the Christian distinctiveness and the school values and the impact they have had on their children. They speak of how the values are more explicit and have become more embedded across the school over the last year. One parent spoke of how the nurturing of the school has helped his child learn to manage anger. They speak of school as a family, "a happy place to be". They feel the values enable older children to support younger children. They enjoy being able to join in with Messy Church and value the links with the church. They feel welcome in school and appreciate the opportunities to join in with their children's learning. The recent Trinity day was enjoyed as a family learning time.

The school provides a wide variety of support for individual pupils; mindfulness, counselling, Lego therapy as well as flexi schooling. This has a positive impact on pupil attainment and progress. Vulnerable children achieve well. Trends for progress and attainment are positive. Core Christian values support the children well, consequently pupils are clear everyone gets on well and cares for each other. One pupil commented on the difference of values between this school and his previous school.

Pupils are aware that values are important to other faiths and that human values are important to people of no faith. They are knowledgeable about Bible stories and understand that these have a message for how they behave. They can explain how the story of the Good Samaritan shows friendship and courage. Learners are aware that Christianity is a worldwide faith but are still developing their depth of knowledge about this. Religious education (RE) supports the Christian character of the school by providing opportunities to explore key concepts and questions, for example 'what is prayer?' RE also provides pupils with a developing understanding of how people of faith live their lives and how that relates to them. An example is the work of the Key Stage 2 children on pilgrimage. RE therefore makes a strong contribution to pupil spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. They are aware of diversity and difference within Christianity, building on the experience of having children from another denominations in school.

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

Collective worship has a high profile within school daily life. Distinctly Christian worship reflects the core values and biblical teachings in school. It is planned by the worship lead and this is linked to values, Christian festivals and the church year. Bible stories are chosen to link to the values. Pupils explained that the Bible stories teach you about values but don't directly tell you how to behave, you need to work that out for yourself from the story. Worship supports pupils making their own positive choices. Learners speak positively about Open the Book which helps them link Bible stories to their own lives.

Children clearly value worship and are very positive about the impact on their lives. "If there was no worship we wouldn't be as nice to each other, it would be harder to be friends, it helps us care and believe in God." Worship follows a clear format. Focus objects support pupil engagement. A pupil lights the candle explaining the reason why but there is no liturgical greeting used. They sing to welcome each other and as they go out. Worship is held outside as often as possible supporting pupils' spiritual development and the link with Forest School learning. Pupil engagement in worship is high. In the worship observed this was evidenced by their capacity to focus on their worship despite the rain half way through. They are responsive and confidently and readily share their thoughts with a partner.

Pupils have a good understanding of the purpose and reasons for prayer, to be close to God, to ask for help, share your worries. They appreciate times to be quiet and reflect and that they have the quiet area outside; however, the use of this area for prayer is not established. Some pupil prayers are shared during worship, however the wider celebration of prayer, for example with a prayer tree, across the whole school community is not yet in place. Pupils wrote the school prayer. Pupil involvement in planning and leading worship is not yet well developed with class worship being established only recently.

Pupil understanding of the Trinity is developing. They are very clear about the concept of a three in one and can use analogies to support this, explaining they are different but all God. However, their understanding of the characteristics of each God is not yet in place or linked to their experience of worship and prayer.

The church is very involved in the life of the school, from providing Open the Book to leading and supporting mindfulness in school. The latter has been led by the incumbent and is used to develop pupil ability to be quiet and reflect both in and outside of worship. A foundation governor leads Messy Church which is very well attended by pupils and parents.

Monitoring of worship takes place by the lead and a foundation governor and feedback is provided for the governing body. This is not recorded in a way to enable impact to be evaluated.

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

Leaders articulate and promote a vision based on Christian values and governors were involved in developing the values and vision. The federation with a non-church school identified the need to foster the church school distinctiveness and as a result the vision for the school as a church school has been made more explicit and the Christian ethos is embedded. Governors feel that their identity as a church school has improved and the school is more linked with the church now. Ethos and values are clear in relevant policies including behaviour. Foundation governors have attended diocesan training and this is fed back to governing body meetings and to the leadership team. This has had an observable impact on the development of the school as a distinctive church school over the last year. 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. However, the format used to record monitoring doesn't allow for the impact on school improvement to be evaluated. There is no regular formal mechanism for pupils to feed back to the governing body.

The governing body is mindful of the particular needs of the pupils in this small and unusual school. They have put in place specific measures to create a loving and affirming environment which nurtures each individual. Pupil behaviour is good, which is indicative of the positive relationships and shared values. RE and collective worship are well led, emphasising their importance in this Christian environment. Leadership is committed to ongoing development of the role of RE and its links to other curriculum areas and worship. The school is implementing Understanding Christianity which is driving improvements in teaching and learning and supports the links with worship and SMSC. Visits to the local church, the Cathedral and Walsingham shrine support this. Developing the role of RE within the school is an identified priority. Pupil singing has become an integral part of worship and pupil involvement is developing through class led worship but this is still in early stages.

The school takes account of pupil voice including on matters relating to Christian character through the school council and regularly consults with parents. Parents and the local church play a strong role in the daily life of the school, through frequent visits, sharing their views and joining in with school and community events such as Messy Church and Forest School. Displays from school are in the Church, sharing pupil views and work with the wider church community.

School has effective links with other church schools and the diocese and benefits from diocesan training and professional development. Leaders have ensured the areas of development from the last inspection have been addressed and that the school has an ongoing vision for its development as a church school.

SIAMS report July 2017 Erpingham Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School Norfolk NRI | 7QR