

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

### Mareham-le-Fen Church of England Primary School

**School Lane  
Mareham-Le-Fen  
Boston  
Lincolnshire  
PE22 7QB**

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lincoln</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Date of inspection	Wednesday 14 June 2017
Date of last inspection	22 and 24 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	120576
Headteacher	Avril Moore
Inspector's name and number	Yvonne Shaw 245

#### School context

This is a much smaller than average sized rural school with 80 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. There is a broadly average proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium throughout the school. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average. Since the last inspection there have been changes in the teaching staff in two of the three classes.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mareham le Fen Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values, linked to Biblical teaching, permeate every aspect of the school's life and work having a strong impact on children's academic, personal and spiritual development.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are fully committed to and share the school's Mission Statement, grounded on Christian values, to ensure best possible outcomes for all children.
- Well planned acts of worship, held in a variety of settings, are enabling children to develop a deeply spiritual dimension to their lives.
- Governors and senior leaders monitor the school's Christian distinctiveness, however, they have not always ensured that evaluation has led to actions for improvement being taken.
- The quality of care that all members of staff show towards families and for each other reflects the love of God and enables the school community to face difficulties with strength.

#### Areas to improve

- Increase the rigour and depth of monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness so that evaluation leads to swift actions for improvement following review outcomes.
- Embed children's participation in planning, preparing, presenting and evaluating high quality and creative acts of worship so that the current work of Worship Wardens is deepened and strengthened.
- Develop children's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith so that they are better equipped to understand diversity and difference within the Christian faith.

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

Christian values work effectively because they motivate all members of the school community and provide clear direction to adults and children in how decisions and personal choices should be made. The school's core Christian values of friendship, forgiveness, respect, responsibility and perseverance are underpinned by the deeply held view that 'Christian values underpin everything we do and a spiritual awareness is at the heart of the daily life of the school'. This is proclaimed in many displays, the website and documentation. It is a living reality and, as a shared vision, successfully celebrates each individual's commitment as a child of God and a member of the school team. Additionally, the acceptance of the love of God amongst the school community has enabled members to face the challenges of improving the school, including outcomes for children, with strength. As a consequence, achievement for the vast majority of pupils is in line with national expectations. Those children who experience difficulties in their learning achieve well from their low starting points. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with knowledge, understanding and skills which are broadly in line with national expectations although some enter below. By the time they leave the school, the majority of pupils are confident, articulate and grateful for the way the school has prepared them for their future lives. Standards in academic achievement are broadly in line with schools nationally. Pupil premium funding (PPF) is used effectively in a variety of ways to support individuals and groups of vulnerable children. Strengthening links with other schools in the area through Peer Review is endorsing leaders' knowledge and understanding of children's achievement.

Children are firmly placed at the heart of all the school's actions. The caring commitment of its leaders, governors, rector and the local church unites this school in the drive for the very best for each child and their family. Indeed, there is a palpable sense of family and belonging that is appreciated by all. Children enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in both good rates of attendance and in their faces as they come into school in the morning. No child has been excluded in recent times. Children say that they feel safe and can articulate that there is no bullying in the school nor incidents of a racist or homophobic nature. They know and can articulate that this is because they are able to apply the Christian values by which the school lives. Religious education (RE) is making a significant impact on children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The subject is a priority within the curriculum and is consistently taught although monitoring and evaluation by leaders lack the rigour needed to bring about further improvement. Children are being introduced to other world faiths within their RE lessons however, their understanding of diversity and difference is limited as is their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

Positive encouragement from adults and each other, through shared Christian values, is guiding children's choices enabling behaviour to be exemplary. Children are guided in the understanding that through living the values on a daily basis, there is no need for school rules. Relationships are strong because as one child said, 'we treat others as we want to be treated ourselves'.

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

The school is a worshipping community whose spiritual life is a natural part of its being. There is a strong sense of coming together in this small school where opportunities to share and celebrate further build a sense of family and belonging. Worship is planned around the Christian calendar so that children mark the main events in the Church year. They are also familiar with some Anglican traditions, such as the opening and closing responses to worship and in formal prayers. Daily worship fully supports the school in its living of its Christian values. It enriches the spiritual development of all who participate. The regular use of planning of examples from the Bible and the life and teaching of Jesus is deepening children's understanding of the person of Jesus Christ and his expectations of Christian life. Children therefore, have a good knowledge of Bible stories. One child commented that: 'I like collective worship because we are able to discuss our belief that we are Christian and we follow the example of Jesus'. Children express their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit at an age appropriate level.

Close links with the parish church enhance the experience of worship. There is a strong desire within the school community to deepen these links through, for example, the display of the many messages which promote the school's core Christian values. Support from the clergy is clearly valued by children, their families and the adults in the school.

Prayer is a key part of worship and is encouraged at many other times in the school day. Children are proud of their knowledge and understanding of formal prayers which reflect the rich traditions of the Anglican faith. They are also keen to show that they are developing a strong understanding of the value of personal prayer and reflection as part of their focus on spiritual growth. Parents are very positive about the strong relationship between the church and school. They praise the work that is being done to welcome them into school and create a sense of family, underpinned by Christian care, compassion and respect.

Acts of worship are held in a variety of places including the hall, church and classrooms. Beautiful displays in classrooms and public areas, celebrate and enhance the spiritual life of the school. They also provide a focus during times of reflection. In one display, phonics teaching is extended to the spelling of the values. Pupils explain how seeing their values, thoughts and prayers displayed all around school remind them to treasure everyone in it.

At present, the contribution of Worship Wardens to acts of worship is limited. They have had some opportunities to plan, prepare, lead and evaluate worship but this is underdeveloped. Worship Wardens express a wish to extend this practice so that a wider range of children may also be leaders of worship. There are logs kept which capture children's feedback on worship however, actions are not yet being taken as a result of the outcome of these reflections. Collective worship is an uplifting time for all ages in the school community.

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

The headteacher, fully supported by staff and governors, has ensured that all have a clear, shared understanding of the school's Christian vision. This is having a significant impact on the community who work together to secure the best possible outcomes academically, socially and spiritually for all children. This is clearly expressed through the school's core Christian values and Mission Statement. Leaders ensure that they proclaim the school's distinctiveness in the vibrant school environment and provision, being passionate that it should be 'spiritually enriching' for the children. Leaders have worked hard to secure improvement in the most recent Ofsted inspection to achieve a good grade. They fully understand the school's performance which is in line with the national picture and they are taking appropriate actions to address weaknesses.

Leaders' evaluation of the school's distinctiveness has not taken full account of the current church school evaluation framework. This is because their monitoring activities have not been rigorous or structured enough to ensure evaluation brings about targeted improvement. Leaders have, however, ensured that the Christian distinctiveness has a convincingly positive impact on the behaviour, relationships and spiritual development across the school. Staff are well supported to carry out their leadership roles for RE and worship and have developed good links with the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education. Other school partnerships secure academic improvements, impacting on the experience of pupils. However, currently there are no formal links with other church schools to support leaders in their evaluation of the Christian character or church school distinctiveness and effectiveness. Within the context and locality of this school, leaders experience difficulties in recruiting new staff and they attribute their resilience in the face of this difficulty to their deeply held Christian values.

Diocesan training has been accessed by leaders and this is helping to shape future developments. The learning from training is shared with all governors and staff. Relationships and links with the local church are strong and established with clergy and lay people working hard and giving of their time as a consequence of the school's shared vision extending beyond the school itself. This demonstrates the strong desire on the part of both the school and the church to work in partnership.

The action points from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met.

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