

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Grendon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Road, Grendon, Northamptonshire NN7 1JW

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Peterborough
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Date of inspection	7 March 2018
Date of last inspection	March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled Primary School 121975
Headteacher	John Wayland
Inspector's name and number	Janet Northing 792

School context

Grendon is smaller than average-sized primary school with 106 pupils currently on roll. Approximately one third of the pupils attending the school live in the village with others coming from neighbouring villages and towns. Most pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The percentage of looked-after pupils is above the national average. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Grendon Church of England Primary School are outstanding

- The school's unique global curriculum, underpinned by the Church of England Vision for Education, results in high levels of academic achievement, personal development and wellbeing for all pupils.
- The provision for prayer and reflection within the curriculum as a whole promotes a deep level of spiritual awareness in learners.
- Links with St. Mary's Church contribute significantly to the distinctive Christian character of the school and collective worship enriching the lives of pupils and their families.
- Collective worship is valued by members of the school community and contributes to the school's Christian ethos through biblical teaching and the celebration of Christian festivals.
- Religious education (RE) supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and makes a positive contribution to the Christian character and values of the school.

Areas to improve

- Involve all stakeholders in creating a theologically informed vision for the school that celebrates its Christian distinctiveness to inspire and shape its future strategic direction. Promote and celebrate this vision and its associated values more explicitly on the school website and in relevant documentation including all policies.
- Access more fully the support available from the diocese to maintain its on-going development as a church school and to share more widely the school's unique global curriculum.

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

Pupils are able to make clear links between the school's Christian values and biblical events and stories. Referring to the Old Testament, Key Stage 2 pupils explain how the story of David and Jonathan is an example of the value of friendship. In talking about kindness, younger pupils choose the example of Noah's care for the animals. A Year 3 pupil referred to Christ's teaching to treat others, as you would like them to treat you. She went on to explain how, 'This shows us that we should apply the school values to our own behaviour.' The school values promote mutual respect and as a consequence relationships between all members of the school promote human flourishing. Members of staff recognise the impact of the school's Christian ethos in articulating that they feel appreciated in their varying roles. Staff also value the embedded links with St Mary's Church, describing the relationship between church and school as a 'blanket that surrounds us.'

As a consequence of the Christian ethos, which underpins the schools' global curriculum, academic achievement is high for all groups of pupils. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above age related expectations in reading, writing and maths. The school ranks in the top one per cent of primary schools nationally for standards achieved in reading in 2017. The school's Christian ethos supports a creative and engaging learning environment. The pupils love to learn and this impacts positively on high levels of attendance which have been consistently above the national average for the last three years. Experiences for spiritual development within the curriculum as a whole are clearly identified and include weekly prayer space reflections and time to reflect on learning. A prayer space reflection activity in Year 3/4 involved pupils focusing on the value of the month. Learners thought about how their personal experiences and feelings could influence their attitudes and actions. This was also linked to RE with reference to Jesus' code for living.

The cultural emphasis within the school's global curriculum means that learners have a well-developed understanding of Christianity as multi-cultural world religion. For example, when learning about Russia, pupils explored the religious practice of orthodox Christians. Where appropriate, the global curriculum also supports pupils' learning about religions other than Christianity. For example, the theme of India provided the context for the study of Hinduism. In addition, the school is involved in a social enterprise partnership in Senegal. This supports pupils' appreciation of the role of the worldwide church in reducing poverty through the creation of a sustainable business. RE has a high profile and is integrated within the global curriculum when themes permit a natural and meaningful link. RE contributes significantly to the Christian character of the school and to learners' SMSC development. For example, in a Key Stage 1 RE lesson, pupils considered the question, 'What makes a place special for a Christian?' Prior learning involved pupils in focusing on their own special place that made them happy, so linking the learning to happiness, the school's value of the month. Pupils went on to consider what made the church a special place for Christians. Older pupils readily express their awareness of the relevance of RE in developing their respect for the religious beliefs of others. They recognise the potential of religious literacy to bring peace to the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Members of staff value worship as a time to extend their understanding of the school values in the context of Christian worship. Likewise, pupils value the experience of learning more about the school values through Bible stories and their exemplification in the life of Jesus Christ. Pupils recognise the importance of Jesus Christ to the Christian faith describing him as Son of God and Saviour of the world. They understand the significance of Lent as a period of time when Christians reflect on the forty days that Jesus Christ spent in the wilderness.

Collective worship is planned systematically by the headteacher and deputy headteacher with support from the clergy at St Mary's Church. This gives continuity and a clear focus on the school values, Christian beliefs and celebrations. It also allows for global issues to be explored in the context of Christian values. Major Christian festivals are held in St Mary's Church, so enriching pupils' experience within worship and supporting the school's Christian character. Central themes for worship involve focusing on the school values in their Christian context through Bible stories which the pupils can apply to their own lives. In response, pupils link their fundraising for others who are less fortunate to following God's example. Learners experience a range of leaders including the headteacher, staff and local clergy giving variety and interest through different worship approaches and styles. Pupils lead the opening liturgy involving a Trinitarian prayer, lighting the candle and playing the 'singing prayer bowl' while a prayer is said.

The last inspection report highlights the need for the school to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by pupils is more routine and systematic. Pupils regularly give their views about worship and their feedback informs its future development. Pupils are routinely involved in setting up prayer boxes in classrooms provided by St Mary's Church. Items in each prayer box focus on the value of the month and pupils have access to them in their classrooms throughout the school day. During a prayer space activity a Year 3 pupil took a small plastic figure out of the prayer box and explained how it helped him to remember that 'God loves me.' Pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is at an appropriate stage of development for their age. Pupils'

experience of prayer includes responsorial prayer, the Lord's Prayer, Grace at lunchtime and writing their own prayers.

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

The school vision states that, 'supported by a strong Christian ethos, our vision is for all pupils to become independent learners, responsible individuals and global citizens.' Underpinned by the Church of England's Vision for Education, school leaders promote a unique global curriculum that delivers high standards of academic achievement, personal development and wellbeing. As a result, pupils make good progress and attain high standards that are above the national average in reading, writing and maths at the end of Key Stage 2. Individual pupil profiles promote personal development across the breadth of the curriculum including SMSC development. The wellbeing of pupils and staff is given a high priority and is linked closely to the values of the school. The provision of a nurture space and training for staff to support the school's high proportion of looked after pupils and those with other needs are proving effective. Although not reflected in governor minutes, this is an example of the way in which the school's Christian values inform the governing body's strategic decision-making. Meetings of the governing body include a summative reflection at the end of each meeting. Consideration is given as to how decisions taken have supported the needs of the pupils at the school.

Since the time of the last inspection the school has made a significant investment in developing leadership at all levels which is potentially beneficial for the leadership of church schools in the future. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are joint leaders of RE and collective worship. They are effective in ensuring high quality practice in both areas, so contributing to the school's Christian ethos and meeting statutory requirements. The monitoring and evaluation of RE and collective worship involves all stakeholders, including pupils, parents and governors. As a consequence, the school has continued to make progress since the time of the last inspection. However, the school does not access the full range of support that is available from the diocese. Therefore, training and development of school leaders and governors is not always directed towards strategically developing the school as a church school. Since the last inspection the school has made considerable progress in further developing its global curriculum with substantial benefits for learners. This is explicitly underpinned by the Church of England's Vision for Education making it a valuable resource for other church schools seeking to improve the quality and range of their curriculum. The school's overarching vision and associated values are supported by a strong Christian ethos. However, the vision currently lacks a succinct and explicit theological underpinning to shape the school's continuing development as a church school.

Links with St Mary's Church are mutually beneficial. Reverend Paula is a frequent visitor into school offering pastoral support, leading collective worship, contributing to RE and serving on the governing body. The school publicises church events which are supported by some members of the school community. Her presence is a visible reminder of the beneficial links between the school and St Mary's Church. Parents are supportive of the school as a church school and recognise the value of its links with the church and local community. Parents are fully engaged in the life of the school. This is demonstrated in their involvement in the Friends of Grendon School, practical support for the curriculum and collective worship.

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