

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

### Bramfield Church of England Primary School

Bridge Street Bramfield IP19 9HZ	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>St Edmundsbury &amp; Ipswich</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Suffolk
Name of Multi Academy Trust	Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Multi Academy Trust
Date/s of inspection	18 May 2017
Date of last inspection	2 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 124722
Head of School	Harriet Pope
Inspector's name and number	Graham Lancaster 713

#### School context

This is a smaller than average sized primary school with 84 pupils on role in 4 mixed age classes. The school converted to an academy as part of the diocesan multi-academy trust in August 2016. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. The proportion of those with SEND is broadly in line. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The head of school was not in post at the time of the previous denominational inspection.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bramfield as a Church of England school are good

- Effective leadership by the head of school and the wider school team results in the school providing a stimulating and challenging learning experience for all pupils within a caring Christian community.
- The school's Christian character underpins school life and has a strong and positive influence on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all of its pupils.
- Religious education (RE) and collective worship contribute well to the school's work as a church school and to enhancing its Christian distinctiveness.

#### Areas to improve

- Deepen pupils' understanding and experience of spirituality by providing physical spaces which include resources and stimuli to prompt and support prayer and reflection.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to contribute to the leadership of collective worship; through planning, delivering and, along with other stakeholders, evaluating the effectiveness of worship, thereby contributing to future developments.
- Create opportunities for the local church representatives to become more of a strategic partner in the leadership of the school, particularly in respect of the Christian values and vision for the school, thereby giving them a greater understanding of the school's place in their church family.

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

The school's values successfully underpin its life and work. They are visible throughout the school and are readily referred to by pupils, parents and staff. As one pupil said 'they keep our school standing'. The values underpin the strong relationships which bind staff and pupils together as a supportive community. This has been particularly evident and has been deepened through the period of bereavement following the death of the previous head of school. Although some values are clearly identified as Christian their biblical foundation is not overtly stated or clearly recognised by pupils.

Consistently effective teaching results in pupils making good progress. The improvements secured prior to the last OFSTED inspection have been continued, which is reflected in the high standards of work in pupils' books. School leaders actively demonstrate Christian values in action as they strive for the highest quality provision for vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs. This is particularly evident in the way in which the values of the school are drawn upon by all staff to support pupils who find meeting behavioural expectations difficult. There have been no exclusions and attendance is in line with the national average. The value placed on RE is reflected both in the classroom displays and the outcomes in pupils' books. The Easter stories, written from the perspective of the different characters involved, provide striking examples of the way in which improvements in writing have been achieved across curriculum areas. Teachers have fully engaged with the Emmanuel Project, which has provided both a resource for them to draw on in their lesson planning and a structure for assessing pupils' progress. The subject leader recognises that further work is required to embed the changes made and to extend pupils' learning from their RE lessons in terms of their own beliefs, as well as learning about Christianity and other religions. The school has links with Tanzania through a diocesan project and the school also has an annual 'global awareness project'. However, the school has identified further developing pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith as an area for development. The school supports a wide range of charities, some of which are selected by the pupils. This included involvement in the recent bike ride which raised a considerable sum for the local St Elizabeth Hospice. Charitable giving is recognised as important in expressing the school's Christian ethos and in providing a practical dimension to Christian values such as compassion and responsibility for others. The learning environment is attractive, celebrating pupil achievement as well as supporting their learning.

Throughout the school there are displays of pupils' work as well as signs and symbols which reinforce the Christian character of the school. The hall is identified by pupils as a 'special place' where they meet for worship and prayer. The importance of prayer is well-established, as is demonstrated by the way in which some pupils are able to discuss their own times of personal as well as collective prayer. In response to the question 'who can we ask for help?' one reception pupil said, 'Jesus holds your hand and you can get across like a bridge'. However, as yet there are no designated places, either inside school or outside in the grounds, which are set aside for prayer and reflection, to support pupils in deepening their understanding and experience of spirituality. For a small school, a very wide range of extra-curricular opportunities are available for pupils. Also, links between the school, the church and the local community are very strong. The breadth of activities enables pupils to experience elements of cooperation, challenge and teamwork; to take responsibility for themselves and their community; to reflect on their own and others' beliefs and to develop a good sense of self. Consequently, the overall provision for pupils' SMSC development is good.

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

Collective worship is highly valued by the pupils, staff and parents. It is well planned by the head of school and worship co-ordinator together, centring on a selected Christian value each half term, which is reinforced in classrooms. Pupils are set a 'Values Challenge' in which they seek to demonstrate this value in action.

Parents have to endorse the nomination of their child for them to be awarded a special certificate in recognition of their efforts. In this way school staff and parents work in partnership to encourage pupils to develop each value in their own life whilst striving for this award. Annually, one pupil in each year group is selected to be given a special commemorative 'Peace Coin', in recognition of their living out of the Christian values.

All staff contribute to the leadership of worship and pupils particularly enjoy the visits from members of the church as the 'Open the Book' team. One parent describes the way in which these sessions draw pupils in 'like a magnet'. Worship is focussed on gospel values, on biblical teaching and contributes significantly to the school's Christian ethos. Frequent mention is made of the person of Jesus and there is also reference to the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils have some understanding of Anglican worship practices, particularly in respect of the church calendar. This is reinforced by visits to the church for major Christian festivals. Parents say that their children really look forward to these occasions and they support them in considerable numbers. They appreciate how their children benefit from the age-appropriate leadership of these services and the ways in which pupils make an active contribution through music, drama and prayer.

The school hall has visible prompts to enhance worship. Staff and pupils gather with a clear sense of anticipation and reverence. All appreciate that this is an important part of the day and of the life of the school. A focal point is evident, though there is scope for this to be developed further. Pupils participate with enthusiasm and are keen and confident in answering questions, drawing on their prior knowledge and understanding. Prayers written by pupils are read by them. Although pupils actively take part in worship, there are limited opportunities for them to plan, lead and contribute to the evaluation and further development of worship. A recent initiative to introduce a class reflection time the end of each day is highly valued by staff and pupils. One pupil described it as 'a calm time to reflect at the end of a busy day'.

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

The head of school has demonstrated exceptional resilience and commitment through a very challenging period for the school. She leads a highly committed and effective team of staff who live out the school's values in their daily work. She has sought to build on the achievements of her predecessor in providing challenging and engaging learning opportunities for all pupils within a distinctively Christian context. This is evident in both the outcomes of pupils of differing abilities and the ways in which the Christian ethos of the school continues to have a high profile. The continuity and sensitive support for the whole community provided by leaders under difficult and distressing circumstances is recognised by governors and particularly appreciated by parents. The pastoral care provided by the local vicar has been instrumental in supporting staff and pupils through this period of bereavement.

The local governing body comprises a rich mixture of individuals, some with considerable experience of governance and others with much enthusiasm but relatively little experience of governance. The latter includes the local vicar as foundation governor. Therefore, although links between the school and the parish church are strong the extent to which church leaders contribute to the school's leadership capacity as a church school is at an early stage of development. Overall, governors know their school well. Their monitoring visits are clearly focussed, providing critical feedback as well as support and recognition of success. They have actively contributed to the accurate and detailed self-evaluation of the school as a church school. Areas of strength are accurately identified, based on supportive evidence. Priorities for improvement clearly reflect leaders' collective ambitions for the school. RE is led well. The subject leader has excellent knowledge and evaluative skills as well as enthusiasm and clear evidence of impact in her area of responsibility. She has been well supported by the diocese in the preparation and implementation of the Emmanuel Project. The investment in her training and dedicated leadership time reflects the importance of RE within the school curriculum. Mutually supportive links with local schools are invaluable to the school, as well as those which now exist within the multi-academy trust. Leaders actively draw on members of the local community to enhance broader educational opportunities for the pupils, for example in building a bread oven in the school's grounds and the recent visit of parents who are paramedics. The ways in which leaders seek to provide the best possible learning opportunities for pupils within a Christian community are much appreciated by parents. As one parent described it, 'it's a joy being part of this school'.

SIAMS report May 2017 Bramfield Church of England Primary School IP19 9HZ