



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

All Saints' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Laxfield

Framlingham Road
Laxfield Woodbridge
Suffolk
IP13 8HD

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 24th June 2015

Date of last inspection: 1st February 2010

School's unique reference number: 124776

Headteacher: Melanie Barrow

Inspector's name and number: Gill Hipwell 480

School context

This rural school serves a predominantly white British community. It is situated in a village with very limited amenities, some miles from the nearest small market town. The incumbent and the executive headteacher have been in post for just over a year. All members of the teaching staff have been in post for less than two years. The school is in the process of federating with another church school. The parish church is some distance from the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints' as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values are embedded in every aspect of school life, resulting in a strength and quality of relationships which enable individuals to flourish
- A commitment to personal development and sense of self for both children and adults has created an exciting and positive approach to learning at all levels
- The distinctively Christian ethos of the school is cherished, nurtured and developed by school and church leaders, ensuring that the school's partnership with the church enriches worship and models the Christian life.

Areas to improve

- Establish a robust procedure for monitoring, evaluating and planning collective worship so that pupils are encouraged and enabled to take more responsibility
- Review the provision of displays in classrooms to ensure that all pupils have access to and opportunity for spiritual reflection and interaction in a familiar environment

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

Pupils at this school say that 'our teachers are awesome' because 'they listen and really care'. Everyone, from senior leaders to the smallest child, understands the importance of listening to each other before acting or making judgements and as a result of this relationships are built on trust and respect. Pupils describe the headteacher as 'strict but nice' and say that they like her consistent approach. One pupil's comment that 'there's always something good about everyone' exemplifies a culture of honouring the individual which is solidly based on Christian teaching. Pupils know that they are important and this gives them the confidence to meet challenges; as a result progress and attainment are good for all groups. Personalised learning and support plans for vulnerable children are regularly reviewed to ensure that all intervention is targeted on need and has an impact. Pupils, staff, governors and parents are united in praising the introduction of a values rich curriculum which is linked to collective worship and policies such as Behaviour Management. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective about themselves and about their learning. Stunning displays and Christian works of art adorn the public spaces around the school, some of which have been created by professionals working with pupils, and these affirm the school's Christian foundation as well as engaging pupils. Displays in classrooms are less effective. Pupils identify opportunities in collective worship, religious education (RE) and Art as particularly thought provoking and talked to the inspector about exploring ideas and beliefs. Staff are aware of the need to explore cultural diversity and make provision within the curriculum and through fundraising for pupils to learn about the life and beliefs of a range of nationalities and groups.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils and staff worship together daily, sometimes joined by members of the church community and parents. Special services take place in the church. Worship is planned around Christian values and the church calendar. A varied group of leaders, including the incumbent and the local Baptist pastor, explore Christian values through bible stories and modern parables, ensuring that pupils can make links with their own choices and behaviour. All adults ensure that the Christian messages from worship are reinforced inside and outside of the classroom and pupils say that values are an influence on their behaviour, giving examples such as inviting younger children to play football. Pupils enjoy worship, saying that it helps them to reflect on their own beliefs and to respect the faith of others. They have opportunities to plan and lead worship as class groups, which they enjoy, and they say that they would like to take an active role more often. Prayer is a familiar part of school life; pupils lead prayer confidently in whole school worship and the prayer corner is well used. Entries in a competition to write a new school prayer showed evidence of spiritual maturity and an understanding of the purpose of prayer in pupils across the age range. Pupils remembered an act of worship focusing on Pentecost but did not have an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some collective worship is monitored by foundation governors and the co-ordinator seeks the opinions of pupils on a fairly regular basis but there is no structure to this and no protocol for including the outcomes in future planning.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education (RE) has a high profile in the school. It is well-resourced and the committed and knowledgeable subject leader benefits from access to high quality training and support from the diocese. Class teachers deliver RE and are well supported by the subject leader. Curriculum planning is of a very good standard and teachers make lessons both accessible and engaging, resulting in outcomes that are at least as good as those in the core subjects. Books scrutinised by the inspector demonstrated varied approaches to assessment; this ensures that pupils with additional needs can achieve well and in some cases these pupils make accelerated progress. RE is monitored by the ethos committee and progress is scrutinised alongside the core subjects via the 'Pupil Asset' scheme. There is a strong focus on enquiry based learning which pupils say they enjoy. There is an appropriate focus on

Christianity which is enhanced through the wider curriculum and through special events such as 'Experience Easter' which was arranged in partnership with the local church community and designed to 'immerse children in the topic'. Pupils speak positively about their RE lessons and say that they especially enjoy 'learning about other people's lives'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is nurtured in RE through empathetic learning and reflection on personal beliefs and life choices.

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

Governors see themselves as strategic partners in the life of the school, with a mission to embrace and develop every individual in their care from a bedrock of Christian values. They say the headteacher 'brings out the best in everyone' and describe the school as 'vital, positive and alive'. There is an ethos committee which takes responsibility for the quality of worship and religious education - both of which meet statutory requirements - and takes a lead in strategic planning for the development of the school's Christian distinctiveness. All governors, not just this committee, ask challenging questions about values and ethos. Planning for federation has provided further opportunities for governors to explore and affirm the school's distinctive character. Pupils are aware of the role that governors play in school and say that 'we know them and they do good things'. The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational. She is firmly committed to the view that 'it is all about the children' and it is her mission to give every child the best possible start. Their wellbeing – and that of the staff – is at the core of all she does. Together with the governors she promotes and secures the school's special ethos, always with an eye on the longer term because 'the life of the school is more than the people in it at the time'. The staff team are fully committed to the Christian vision; all are keen to undertake training and are supported and encouraged to take on responsibilities. A culture of shared ownership and responsibility ensures that initiatives and improvements are embedded and sustainable. The partnership with the church is very strong. The character of the school has been sustained through some difficult times by the commitment and faithful service of local Christians, and their ongoing involvement enriches the spiritual life of the school. Church members take responsibility for the prayer corner, changing the displays to reflect the values in collective worship and making it a spiritual haven for children. Parents are welcomed to worship and other school events and they know that their opinions are listened to and valued. One parent described the headteacher as 'very engaged and always visible', saying that this is a different and much appreciated relationship which has instilled trust. Links with the local community are strong, reflecting the aim of leaders to be outward looking and servant-minded.

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