

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Trinity Church of England VA Primary School

Lavenham Way, Stowmarket, IP14 2BZ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Not applicable
Local authority	Suffolk
Date of inspection	2nd February 2017
Date of last inspection	Not applicable
Type of school and unique reference number	I40623
Headteacher	Linda Curran-Spain
Inspector's name and number	Linda Russell 893

School context

Trinity Church of England VA Primary School opened in September 2014. There are 77 pupils (aged 4-7) on roll, with 2.5% having special educational needs and 10.3% eligible for pupil premium. Numbers are due to rise to 315 by 2021 covering the whole primary age range. Created by refurbishing a redundant middle school site, ongoing alterations provide a daily challenge.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Trinity as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The ability of all stakeholders to clearly articulate and promote a vision for Trinity that is embedded in Christian values ensures that every child feels safe and achieves well.
- Highly effective teaching of Christian values through worship and religious education (RE) enables children to think and reflect deeply, impacting significantly on their spiritual and emotional development.
- The highly motivated and dedicated headteacher, supported by the governors, has a clear vision and strategy for moving the school forward as a Church school.

Areas to improve

- Create opportunities for children to plan, lead and evaluate worship in order for them to take a leading role and become ambassadors of Christian distinctiveness.
- Obtain the RE Quality Mark in order to ensure that good practice is embedded and for the school to be recognised as a leading school for RE.

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

Christian values of love, respect and friendship are firmly at the heart of everything the school does. Because children know they are valued, they are confident to voice their opinions, to take on responsibility and to demonstrate the Christian values of compassion, responsibility and service in their daily lives. They know that adults will support them, listen to them and guide them. As a result of the strongly held belief that every child is welcome and valued as a child of God, the attention paid to individual children and the willingness of staff to go that extra mile can be seen in the excellent standards achieved, with vulnerable children achieving as well as their peers. As staff say, 'our Christian values underpin everything we do'. Children say they love coming to school, feel safe and secure and as a result attendance is good. They are aware of what bullying is and were unanimous in saying they had not seen it at Trinity, consequently behaviour is excellent with the playground exhibiting a harmonious, peaceful environment. Children talk with confidence about making good choices because 'God wouldn't like it if we make bad

ones', showing how rooted in Christian teaching the behaviour policy is. Parents are very aware of the Church school ethos and talk about the importance of instilling these values early. The school council is newly formed, but is already organising fund raising activities for Kagera diocese in Tanzania, demonstrating Christian values of generosity and compassion in action. Pupil voice is being enhanced by the provision of a suggestion box and a worship committee. There is an openness and willingness to reach out, especially to like minded schools in the area, enabling children to showcase their work to a larger audience. In this way, self esteem and confidence is being raised. The development of a sensory garden with a large cross at its centre gives children and staff a place for outdoor worship and contemplation, something they value. Careful integration of spiritual, moral, social and educational values into RE lessons and reflection time in worship, together with a commitment to educational visits or visitors each term, ensures that learning is rich and diverse. Children are being given time and space to ponder 'big questions' which impacts significantly upon their spiritual, moral, social and emotional development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is firmly established in the school and all play an active part. It is a joyful occasion and enriches the lives of all who attend. Children have the opportunity to see various Anglican practices represented in worship through the active involvement of local churches and governors. The school has identified through regular monitoring by the headteacher and governors the need for children to have a greater part in worship. Children open worship with an Anglican greeting, place the Bible on the altar table, read a prayer, organise the music and lead 'Peace be with you' at the end of worship. The recently established worship committee with elected members from each class clearly demonstrates how important worship is at Trinity. Children listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and participate. Children show great reverence when the candle is lit at the beginning of worship, explaining that 'Jesus is the light of the world' and 'God is with us'. Singing of hymns and the Lord's Prayer adds to the spirituality of worship. The school is aware of the need to develop an understanding of the concept of Trinity amongst the children beyond it being the name of the school. Prayer is used throughout the day, not just in worship. Children have a clear understanding of the purpose of prayer and are very aware that they are talking to God, 'We speak to Him in prayers and He speaks to us in the Bible'. The location of prayer boxes around school enables children to appreciate the place prayer can have in their lives and gives them opportunities to reflect. The Open the Book team are regular visitors and speak enthusiastically about the positive effect of coming together fortnightly at school on their Christian fellowship. Worship themes impact on the lives of the children who were discussing forgiveness, 'I think you only really need to say sorry once, but you have to mean it.' Worship is well planned by the coordinator using the Values for Life resource. Current and previous worship themes are thoughtfully and prominently displayed throughout the school, enabling children to refer to them on a daily basis. Parents are made aware of the current theme via the school newsletter. Parents say that children often discuss worship themes at home and they are impressed with children's knowledge of Bible stories. Parents have purchased Bibles for the children to read at home at the request of their children clearly demonstrating the impact of worship. Worship themes are followed up in RE lessons. Children's views are sought through the worship committee in order for worship to develop further. Staff acknowledge the contribution made by worship on their own spirituality and welcome the chance to reflect, 'reflection time has allowed me to grow spiritually'. Worship fully complies with legal requirements.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The school provides a rich, enquiry based curriculum for RE which is based on the diocesan Emmanuel Project. The relevance to children's lives of themes discussed are utilised very effectively. Children clearly enjoy RE with many describing it as their favourite subject. Parents say that children readily discuss what they have been learning in RE at home and this enhances families' faith at home. This powerfully demonstrates the importance of RE at Trinity. Cross curricular links are identified within planning, so RE themes are discussed more widely than in the discrete RE lessons. The youngest children are able to point out similarities and differences between their local church and a cathedral. Differentiated activities enable children to use skills from other areas of the curriculum effectively. Hot seating of a character from the nativity gave the children a chance to use their drama skills. 'I wonder' questions are used extensively, with staff having the confidence to give children time to ponder and not require immediate responses. In this way, RE contributes significantly to children's spirituality. Standards in RE are in line with those of other curriculum areas which supports the school's view that standards are good for all children. The excellent teaching that enables the children to make progress is regularly observed by the headteacher. Notes are taken and followed up in coaching sessions. As a result, all staff are well equipped to teach RE, enjoy teaching RE and take part in regular staff development in order to keep up to date. The value placed on RE can be seen in the RE scrapbooks that each class maintains. They capture the varied and stimulating activities such as walking in Jesus' footsteps in the playground. Children in Year One had their unit of work on baptism come to an end with the baptism of the class mascot in the local church. Children explained that they wanted the mascot to be 'welcomed into God's family'. Children show a good knowledge of biblical stories, remembering details from those heard much earlier in the year.

Major life events, festivals and saints' days are all part of the curriculum offered to the children and through these children are able to experience and deepen their understanding of Christianity. Children talk about taking part in church services for Remembrance Day and harvest, showing the support of the local church community. Children are being taught about other faiths as part of their RE and have displayed their class rules on a scroll because 'our rules are special to us, just like the Torah is special to Jewish people'. They are also able to discuss links between faiths when they looked at the life of Moses. Children are beginning to develop their understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith.

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

Under the exemplary leadership and vision of the headteacher, the new school community has come together to create a distinctively Christian environment. This inclusive community, which is firmly based on Christian values and prayer, ensures that all are valued and seen as unique. These values, embedded in all aspects of school life, are especially evident in all school documents. This influence on school policy, in particular the approach the school takes to those with social and emotional needs, has led to outside agencies praising the school for its actions. Attention to detail ensures the school environment proclaims its Christian foundation through signs and symbols throughout. This is supplemented by thoughtful displays demonstrating the school's Christian distinctiveness; for example, there is a detailed explanation of the Christian significance of the school logo. The welcome children and parents receive in the playground from all the teachers demonstrates powerfully the ethos of the school, working together for the benefit of all. This starts at induction where parents describe the feeling that the school 'wraps God's love around each and every child'. Having no designated catchment area, the school relies on parental choice or is allocated children from oversubscribed schools in the area. Parents who did not choose Trinity are now enthusiastic supporters of the school, encouraging others to send their children, citing the warm family feel, the approachability of the whole staff team and the sense of a Christian family that the school has created. Staff are being well developed by an excellent coaching model which sees the headteacher working alongside staff in order for them to develop the appropriate skills to lead and shows the school is actively planning for the future as it grows. Staff are also well supported by excellent training opportunities provided by the diocese and a foundation governor. As a result, all staff are being well prepared for future leadership in a church school. RE has a high profile within the school and receives an annual budget. This ensures RE is well resourced, enabling children to handle artefacts and deepen their understanding of religious symbols. Priority given to RE and worship through the leadership of the headteacher sends out a clear message about the importance of these aspects to the whole community. The modest self evaluation demonstrates powerfully that the school is always looking to improve. Governors monitor frequently and effectively; as a result they know the school well, act as critical friends and are able to plan for the future. Church school distinctiveness and self evaluation regularly feature in minutes of meetings showing the importance placed on these aspects of the schools' work. Alongside their monitoring duties, governors offer their skills and expertise regularly to enhance the learning opportunities for the children. It is impressive that leaders have maintained their Christian focus during the challenging conversion of the building in order to create the first church school in the area.

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