

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Tudor Church of England Primary School

Tudor Road, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 1NL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	August 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi Academy Trust
Date of inspection	27 June 2017
Date of last inspection	24 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 142026
Headteacher	Elizabeth Campbell
Inspector's name and number	Judith Ruff 528

School context

The school is of average size with 238 pupils on roll. In August 2015 it converted to academy status and became part of the St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, but Turkish and Eastern European families are also represented within the school. 24% of pupils receive additional funding based on free school meals entitlement. 20% of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. There have been significant staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the present headteacher, who has been in post since September 2016.

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

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has galvanised the school community to articulate a clear vision based on the uniqueness and preciousness of all to God. This has led to explicit Christian values transforming pupils' life chances through key values such as love, forgiveness, compassion and hope.
- The strong, effective partnership, established over a three-year period, between the RE subject leader and the diocesan schools' adviser has resulted in significant improvements to the ways in which religious education (RE) is planned and delivered across the school.
- The sustained commitment of an inter-denominational clergy team to lead collective worship enables pupils to experience a range of styles and approaches to worship, which enthuse and engage them.
- Carefully planned guided reflection and the practice of creating stillness through the use of prayers, music and art develop pupils' spirituality and increase opportunities to bring thoughts and ideas to God.

Areas to improve

- Increase governors' engagement levels in the strategic development of the school as a church school by ensuring that monitoring activities are evaluative and lead to identifiable improvements to provision. In addition ensure that discussions at local governing board meetings are extensive and based on a secure understanding of practice, enabling governors to more fully understand the strengths of the school.
- Continue to review and refine assessment practices in RE, providing clear evidence for judgements and increasing pupils' opportunities to explain and discuss their RE learning through extended writing opportunities in order to keep governors informed on standards and progress in RE.
- Continue to develop the faith council's experiences of planning and leading worship, so that they deepen their understanding and appreciation of the importance of worship to Christians.

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

'Everyone at Tudor Church of England Primary is recognised as a gift from God, created and loved by God, and for whom there is a unique and wonderful purpose'. This sums up accurately the vision that inspires and drives all members of the school community to do their best day by day to achieve 'life in all its fullness'. From this vision emanates a set of distinctively Christian values, which are deeply embedded within the life of the school. Compassion for the vulnerable and less fortunate shines through the work of the headteacher, senior leaders and all staff. This includes a highly valued family support worker, who provides much needed friendship, advice and counselling to both families and children. Nurture groups, support for anger management and signposting to external agencies which can offer further support make a significant impact on families' ability to cope with day to day living. As one parent wrote, 'The school feels blessed and I believe that there is a spiritual covering and protection which comes from Godly leadership, obedience to His values and prayer'. Pupils talk about perseverance and courage supporting their efforts in their academic work, keeping them going despite challenges. A parent spoke of the story of Daniel in the lion's den supporting her autistic son as he contemplated the arrival of the school sports' day with trepidation. Although not yet at national averages, academic achievement is improving rapidly through sustained accelerated progress for all groups. Recent tragic national events have prompted pupils to reflect on the courage and bravery of the emergency services and to pray for the bereaved and those who have lost their lives. The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They are polite, think of others and understand what makes a true friend. The school's behaviour policy makes clear the links between the Christian values of forgiveness and reconciliation. Attendance meets the national average, with no persistent absenteeism. There has been one fixed-term exclusion. This was after a significant period of support and effort had been put in for both family and child, which was acknowledged by all concerned. Pupils' spirituality is developed extremely well through a wonderfully inspiring reflection area, focusing on the half termly value, which has music playing, books to read, opportunities to write and read prayers and to be inspired by some high-quality pupil art work in a range of media. Moral and social development are good, supported by values such as respect, justice, truthfulness and trust. Pupils are beginning to make links between the chosen values and Bible stories. Bible verses and other inspirational texts encourage all community members to think and reflect on their lives and their responses to each of the values taught. Pupils benefit significantly in their understanding of diversity within the Christian faith from a wide range of clergy leading worship, with their own distinct styles and approaches to worship. Understanding of Christianity as a world-wide global faith is supported by the diocesan link with Kagera. This was made more alive by a recent visit to the school by a volunteer worker who had worked in Africa on a water project. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the impact of religion and belief on people's lives and how it shapes their actions and concerns. It develops their understanding of how Christians, in particular, worship and practise their faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

'Collective worship is the heart of our school life'. This statement is endorsed by the inspection findings which show clearly the impact that worship is having on every member of the school community. Staff talk about the precious opportunity in the school day 'to reflect on my personal contribution, to be still and just sit and be part of the whole school community coming together'. Pupils talk of the excitement of the different worship leaders enabling them to role play stories, such as in the Open the Book presentations, and to understand more about God and the Bible from a range of styles and approaches to worship. Pupils' views on collective worship have resulted in an increased emphasis on opportunities for pupils to write and lead prayers and for them to sing more relevant and uplifting songs. A recently formed faith council supported the worship leader on the day of the inspection telling the story of King Nebuchadnezzar and the courage of Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego in refusing to worship the golden statue. All in the school community were given parts to play as the story developed and the message of courage in the face of adversity came through clearly to all present, delivered in an engaging, inclusive and enjoyable way. Pupils' prayers, centred on each chosen value, are thoughtful, reflective and powerful, demonstrating a profound depth of understanding and empathy for those for whom God's support is being asked. Right from the early years in school, pupils pray with confidence, earnestness and spontaneity. Pupils sing beautifully, either in a round or altogether. Their faces show how much feeling and thought are being put into the words that they sing. Worship is clearly focused on exploring each chosen value. Planning records are not currently kept, but a lot of thought and liaison with worship visitors takes place to ensure that the experience is a relevant, uplifting and memorable experience for all. Staff discussion on the impact of collective worship led to it being moved to the start of each day, so that the messages and impact from the worship experience could resonate and permeate throughout the school day. The church is used well for festivals as well as for learning experiences such as exploring Easter and the eucharist, with the support of the vicar and cathedral staff. Pupils' understanding of the Trinity is age appropriate. Members of the faith council are growing into their role. At present their understanding of the importance of worship for Christians is developing. Although governors' monitoring lacks some clarity of purpose, there is convincing evidence that worship is of a consistently high quality and has a significant transforming effect on both adults and pupils.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Overall standards for the large majority of learners are in line with those expected in the Emmanuel Project, which covers the Suffolk agreed syllabus for RE. The excellent support provided by the diocesan schools' adviser, over a three-year period of collaboration with the RE subject leader, has significantly improved teachers' planning and quality of teaching. Confidence levels have soared and teachers' pride in their pupils' RE outcomes is clear to see. Progress is accelerating as both teachers and pupils enjoy exploring the different faiths and religious concepts and beliefs together. Books are well-presented. The RE subject leader carries out book scrutinies weekly. She encourages and supports other staff members well and the termly visits from the schools' adviser allow quality time for staff to discuss their planning and look through outcomes with her. Assessment of RE is developing through use of focused assessment grids accompanying each unit, although this is not yet sufficiently refined to provide clear evidence for judgements. The impact of marking on RE outcomes is improving with an increased amount of reference to marking against the assessment grids using specific RE criteria. Opportunities for pupils to demonstrate through explanations and reasoning their RE learning in extended writing pieces are not yet in place. Monitoring of RE throughout the school is good and there is considerable evidence of changes and refinements to practice as a result, including greater confidence in assessing and planning for progression. Monitoring suggests that RE teaching is good, with outstanding practice in the early years' unit. The RE subject leader has not yet reported to governors on standards and progress in RE. On the inspection day, children in the Reception class were discovering the wonder of God's creation through becoming scientists, together with white coats, to explore the beautiful perfumes found in garden flowers, writing prayers with adult support and using smooth pebbles to make cross forms in the external areas. Pupils in Years 2 were enjoying learning about a Jewish Sukkah, with pupils exploring the various blessings and prayers that Jewish people give for their food. The class-made Sukkah enabled a number of children to sit inside and reflect on how these would be decorated and celebrated during the festival of Sukkot. In Year 6 pupils were thinking about the key messages told through the stories of Buddha about the four noble truths leading to enlightenment. They were well engaged, working collaboratively on creating models of part of each story, and preparing to put key messages learned on a paper leaf for the Bodhi tree. The school has worked hard on its creative and enquiry based approach to RE teaching and learning. This has developed very successfully, The pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their RE lessons. They love learning about other world faiths and understand the importance of knowing and understanding key beliefs and practices, so that respect can grow for diversity and difference. RE has a high profile both across the school and more widely. Outcomes from pupils' work have been used as exemplars in diocesan training of RE teachers. This has led to an enormous sense of pride and achievement on the part of all at the school. Work on the school's values is woven seamlessly into the RE curriculum, raising awareness of how the different faiths hold many of these values as central to the way in which their followers live their lives.

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

Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, members of the school community have come together to articulate the clear and unequivocal message that each individual is valued and cherished by God and therefore is treated as such within the school community. Since her arrival in September 2016, the headteacher has led the school with a passion and a conviction that Christ should be at the centre of all decision making and policies that the school adopts. She has built up again the hope of all who want the school to flourish as a rich and committed Christian community, where values from the Gospels form the basis of all relationships. Over a relatively short space of time, she has accelerated achievement of pupils, supported the vulnerable and given encouragement to those who are struggling with life's challenges. She has inspired her staff to renew their efforts to do outstanding things. As one staff member said, 'If I have had a bad day, I think about the value of courage and know that next day I will come back and once again try my very best'. School development planning includes a priority around church school distinctiveness and there is a good level of commitment to this from all staff. Self-evaluation of this priority by school leaders is accurate, but governors do not collaborate in the process. Discussions at local governing board (LGB) meetings focusing on this area are brief, lacking both rigour and evaluative content. As a result, governors' engagement with the strategic Christian development of the school is weak. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school leaders and their efforts to make the school a beacon of hope and support for families. Partnership with the local church is good. Communication is very good through the school website, newsletters and invitations for them to give their views on the school. 'This seems like a large family, rather than a school'. Leadership of collective worship and RE are good, informed by distinctly Christian values and providing guidance and support for all who participate. Relationships with the diocese are strong and have significantly supported the school with improving provision in RE particularly. Leadership opportunities for staff are developing, including opportunities to work across the MAT schools and gain experience of Christian leadership. The early years' leader is supporting other practitioners, including supporting two early years' teachers with their RE work.