

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

<b>Worlingworth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School</b>	
Shop Street, Worlingworth, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 7HX	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>St Edmundsbury and Ipswich</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Suffolk
Date of inspection	7 November 2017
Date of last inspection	19 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary controlled primary 124750
Executive Headteacher Head of School	Victoria Gascoyne-Cecil Sophie Savage
Inspector's name and number	David Bunkell 815

### School context

Pupil numbers have increased considerably since the previous inspection, and currently 61 attend, aged from 3 to 11, divided into three classes. Most live in the village or in nearby rural communities. In April 2017 the school formed a partnership with another voluntary controlled church school, with the headteacher leading both schools, and designated 'executive headteacher'. A head of school is in charge when the headteacher is at the other school. The parish church is a considerable distance away, so is used for collective worship only on special occasions. In 2012 the school had been found by Ofsted to be inadequate and placed in special measures. Four years later Ofsted judged all areas to be outstanding.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Worlingworth as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Relationships between all in the school community are highly positive and mutually respectful due to the all-pervading Christian values which are at the centre of every aspect of school life.
- Collective worship is firmly rooted in the Bible and Christian teaching, with Jesus Christ at the centre, and pupils showing a mature understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- The leadership and management of religious education and collective worship are given great priority, leading to highly effective practice in each.

### Areas to improve

- Extend the current thorough monitoring of collective worship (CW) by some pupils to include a greater range of pupils, and ensure that all instances of the monitoring of CW may lead directly to improvement.
- Explore ways in which pupils might be actively involved in the partnership with another school, to widen their experience of church schools and to enhance their individual spiritual journeys.

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

A Christian ethos is at the heart of the school. Pupils benefit from the deeply embedded and explicit emphasis on modelling Christian love at all times. In conversation pupils of all ages showed that they fully understand the succinct mission statement 'cherish all, achieve together' which they created along with staff and governors. One pupil said, 'we don't have grudges here, and are good at saying sorry and forgiving'. The supportive atmosphere played a major part in the very rapid and sustained improvement in academic achievement between 2012 and 2016, as recognised by Ofsted. Attainment is now in line with or above national expectations in all areas, with no significant differences for those with particular needs. Pupils who had previously attended another school unfailingly said how much happier they are at Worlingworth, and how the compassionate and friendly staff enable them to persevere and achieve.

Levels of attendance are high despite the fact that many parents work for a nearby agricultural company whose workers cannot take holidays in July or August. Senior staff were able to demonstrate that for the few families who do find regular, punctual attendance difficult, a caring and sensitive approach is based firmly on Christian values. Pupil exclusions are infrequent, and again a compassionate and wise approach has enabled the trust of parents and children.

Pupils show a highly developed understanding of spirituality in the way in which they care for one another and their environment. Several pupils mentioned throughout the day the reflective garden, where they go to be quiet, to think, reflect or pray. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded in collective worship and whenever possible across the curriculum, particularly in religious education (RE). Their behaviour at this inspection was seen to be of the highest standard, as also acknowledged by Ofsted. In their free time, pupils of both sexes and all ages were seen to play together harmoniously. Pupils clearly understand right and wrong, but see that lapses can occur. They are particularly adept at sorting out petty differences themselves, knowing that this is reconciliation and that apologising and forgiving are essential.

Senior pupils enjoy trips to London, where public transport is used. As a result, they have a much better understanding of cultural diversity than many children from rural Suffolk, for example maturely discussing the range of fellow travellers on the London underground and the variety of clothing worn, including the religious significance of some clothes. Pupils recalled a recent visit to a Sikh gurdwara, where some had tried on a turban as part of the experience. Some pupils listed RE amongst their favourite lessons, saying they enjoy learning about major world religions, including Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith taking many different forms. They say they are grateful that this knowledge equips them to respect those of all faiths and cultures. Pupils recognise the importance of charitable giving, and were discussing how to contribute to this year's Children in Need appeal. Each year they pack shoeboxes at Christmas to send to needy children overseas.

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

Many pupils and adults see the daily time of CW as a highlight of the day, and are able eloquently to discuss their views on the Christian values that are shared. All teaching staff lead sessions of CW, along with some of the support staff. Conversations with pupils show that CW has a direct positive impact on their behaviour and relationships, one saying 'I know that I need to take responsibility for my actions', and another citing the parable of the prodigal son. Biblical material is often used, frequently incorporating drama. At the inspection, pupils acted out the Old Testament story of Joseph's rejection by his brothers, and the ultimate forgiveness and reconciliation. In response to questioning, pupils showed great empathy in expressing Joseph's possible feelings at the time of his brothers' rebuff. CW starts with a Christian greeting and the lighting of a candle, and includes a suitable hymn or song and prayer. The worship table has a coloured cloth appropriate to the time of the liturgical year, and a cross given by the local church. Pupils had noticed that as the inspection occurred between All Souls' Day and Remembrance the cloth was red, whereas it had recently been green. Pupils could explain the significance of major festivals, and in particular Pentecost, recognising the Trinitarian nature of God. Regarding the Holy Spirit, one pupil said 'we always feel his presence'.

Themes are chosen to raise aspirations, following the 'Values for Life' programme on a four-yearly cycle. In addition to the prayers said at CW, prayer is used before lunch, and many pupils write prayers and place them on prayer trees in each classroom. Further prayers are written on old compact discs, hung from the trees and shrubs in the reflective garden showing pupils' understanding of the place and purpose of both shared and private prayer. At a recent whole day devoted to learning about prayer, all pupils had learnt the Lord's Prayer, and could also use sign language throughout it.

A group of pupil volunteer 'collective worship ambassadors' organise the practical aspects of CW sessions including the choice of songs and prayers, and meet with staff to discuss possible improvements. The use of a candle came about entirely at their suggestion. The ambassadors also seek out people to be presented with weekly awards for successfully following the current CW theme. Recipients include adults in addition to fellow pupils, as the headteacher had been given an award for demonstrating responsibility when she took on the leadership of the

partner school. The ambassadors confidently plan and present parts of CW, and also regularly complete detailed sheets to evaluate CW, although other pupils' views are not recorded so systematically.

Pupils benefit from a wide variety of leaders of CW and their range of Christian viewpoints. In addition to staff, those leading CW include the incumbent, others from the local church, and a Baptist pastor from a nearby village. The recommendations from the previous inspection to involve children in leading CW and for governors to monitor and evaluate CW have been met in their entirety, as governors now attend regularly and complete written evaluations. These show that improvements have been enabled, such as even greater pupil participation, but on occasions suggestions for improvement have not necessarily been fully explored.

The reflection garden is used on occasions for collective prayer, and the community centre is to be used this year for the Nativity service, as it is nearer than the church and will accommodate more people than the school hall.

Pupils decorated the parish church recently for the harvest service and sent harvest gifts, but the church's distance from the school and lack of facilities including provision for car parking on a winding lane with no pavement preclude more frequent use of the church building.

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

Senior staff and governors constantly ensure that the school's Christian values pervade every aspect of life at the school. They are able to explain the immense impact this has on the lives of pupils, for example its contribution to the recent rapid improvement in academic standards by pupils who are equipped to persevere. The executive headteacher and head of school work extremely effectively as partners to steer the spiritual leadership of the school. Self-evaluation is thorough and honest, and is compiled by all staff and governors. In addition to preparing for the cycle of church school inspections, every annual school development plan has an entire section headed 'SIAMS', with specific targets and actions for each of the core questions. These show how improvements have come about, for example in one plan showing the embryonic idea of forming a 'worship council' to involve pupils more in CW, with this being refined over time to the eventual scheme of collective worship ambassadors. The whole curriculum is influenced by the school's Christian vision, so pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is ensured. Parents regularly attend CW and many other events in school, and are fully informed about learning and the current CW theme through regular newsletters and meetings.

The school benefits from an exemplary governing body, who are passionate about maintaining the Christian ethos, and whose members corporately and individually are highly effective in balancing the roles of support and holding staff to account. An 'ethos committee' meets regularly to review matters relating to SIAMS.

The school has a very strong partnership with the local church, whose members take their responsibilities towards the school very seriously. The incumbent is highly supportive of the school, and clearly knows it very well. The fact that he is responsible for eight parishes and four church schools means that his visits are not as frequent as he might like, but this is compensated by the very active involvement in the school of members of the congregation, as foundation governors or as regular CW leaders. The church always displays pupils' work.

The school is held in affection by the wider village community, with an open invitation to a special time of CW for Remembrance expected to be taken up by many who have no direct connection to the school. The school is regularly included in intercessions at the church, and news about the school is published in the monthly benefice magazine and on a village website. The church presents every school leaver with a Bible.

Pupils and staff benefit from strong links with the diocese, with pupil visits to the cathedral, diocesan training for staff and governors, and ongoing regular support from diocesan staff, all of which contribute to maintaining and developing the school's Christian ethos.

Leaders are planning very carefully for the future success of this and other church schools. The newly-established partnership followed a lengthy period of thoughtful consideration, and this is continuing now regarding the next steps for the partnership. Currently the partnership involves staff and governors, but the pupils from each school are not yet involved in joint projects.

CW and RE are considered priorities for leadership and resources, enabling the highly effective practice evident in both areas, and going well beyond basic statutory responsibilities.