

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

### Spalding Saint John the Baptist Church of England Primary School

Hawthorn Bank, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 1JQ	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lincoln</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Date of inspection	19 October 2017
Date of last inspection	24 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary – voluntary aided - 120613
Headteacher	Paul Reid
Inspector's name and number	John Gibbs - 818

#### School context

The school is a much larger than average primary school with 431 children on roll. Pupils come mainly from Spalding and the surrounding area. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds though the number of children from other nationalities has increased since the last inspection and the percentage of children with English as an additional language is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupil premium children and those with special educational need and/or disability (SEND) is below the national average. The school has a strong relationship with the local parish church though currently there is a vacancy for a new vicar.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Spalding Saint John the Baptist Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian ethos is outstanding and provides a strong basis for all the school's activities, relationships and future developments.
- The leadership and management of the school is strong at all levels, with a drive to continuously improve outcomes and quality for all pupils.
- The strong relationship with the local parish church forms a solid foundation for the Christian life of the school.
- Excellent relationships exist throughout the school and community, reflecting the impact of care, respect and compassion lived out in its daily life.

#### Areas to improve

- Widen the pupils' knowledge of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith to increase their understanding of and respect for diversity and difference both within the church and other faith communities.
- Ensure that the religious education (RE) scheme of work is updated in the light of latest national and diocesan guidelines.

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

Spalding St John the Baptist CE Primary School is outstanding and has a clear Christian ethos that underpins all aspects of the life of the school. The school has worked hard on creating a set of values since 2012 and these values enable the school to live up to its vision as, 'A caring Christian Community achieving full potential for all.' School values such as respect, perseverance, forgiveness, compassion, forgiveness and love are understood by the whole school community and the pupils articulate them well. The school has worked hard to ensure these values have roots in Christian teaching with pupils making links between them and Bible stories and how they influence their daily lives.

Relationships at all levels are exemplary, reflected in the high quality of care given. Consequently, the pupils feel they are listened to and feel safe, enjoying the whole school experience which in turn results in high attendance and good achievement. Pupils commented, 'I like everything about St John's and 'There is always someone to talk to whoever you are'. Pupils are well behaved, confident and polite. They are given responsibilities which enable them to develop into well-rounded individuals with a clear sense of right and wrong. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the distinctive character of the school. Older pupils look after and support the younger pupils round the school and their own age group through their role as peer mediators. One pupil commented, 'We always look out for one another.'

Parents are extremely positive about the church school ethos and are delighted by the wide range of experiences offered by the school. Parents enjoy the fact that their children come home and talk about the Christian aspect of the school and that they all have opportunity to attend church weekly. The School Council meets regularly and has raised money and donated goods to charities such as Spalding Food Bank, MacMillan Nurses, The Shoebox Appeal and many more. This demonstrates a strong link to their Christian foundation through service to others. The children enjoy this work and a pupil commented, 'We have fun raising money for charity, it helps other people and makes me feel good inside.'

The school is making a significant contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. They have opportunities to be still in the reflection areas both in classrooms and the outside reflection area adjacent to the playground. Alongside excellent opportunities to explore and express their views on the school's values as part of their learning, the quality of reflection makes an important contribution to the development of their spirituality and has resulted in an impressive level of personal spirituality amongst the pupils. The school has gained the foundation level International Schools Award which has deepened pupils' understanding of cultural diversity but their understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith has not been fully developed.

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

Worship holds a place of central importance to school life and is inclusive, engaging and affirming, making an impact on the school's Christian ethos. Worship themes are planned round the school's values, spiritual, moral and social issues as well as the church calendar thereby impacting positively on behaviour and attitudes. Pupils experience a range of worship, including whole school, class and church based experiences that are all led by teaching staff, local clergy and outside visitors. Music plays an important part in collective worship and the pupils sing well with a high degree of enthusiasm. Aspects of the Anglican tradition are observed in the consistent practice of using a cloth to represent the different seasons of the church year and the lighting of candles.

Pupils enjoy collective worship, listening and interacting appropriately. Prayer is used extensively by the pupils who understand that it is a conversation with God, and that they can talk about their worries and concerns as well as it being a way to celebrate the good things in their lives. Pupils regularly write their own prayers enabling them to relate their own thoughts and feelings to life in and out of school. Bible stories feature regularly in daily worship and enable pupils to develop a broad understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit which they talk about with a good degree of understanding.

There is a strong relationship between school and local church with the church used every day for RE and other lessons as well as for weekly worship and is regarded by the pupils as a natural extension of the school. This is valued by parents who take advantage of the opportunities to attend school acts of worship in church celebrating major Christian festivals on a regular basis.

Collective worship is effectively monitored by foundation governors with the headteacher and pupils are involved by

contributing their own evaluations as well as choosing hymns, writing prayers and acting out scenes from the Bible and other sources. The evaluation contributes to school development planning thereby enhancing the worship experience of the pupils.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Standards of attainment in RE exceed national expectations by the time the children reach the end of key stage 2. A significant number of pupils achieve at a high level and their progress is good from their starting points. The pupils acquire a very good understanding of Christianity as well as developing their knowledge of other world religions. This is reflected in their ability to identify some similarities between different religious beliefs and a growing understanding of how faith underpins values and making simple moral choice. A wide range of skills are taught so that pupils apply their knowledge of RE in other areas, especially creative subjects including drama and art.

Teaching of RE is of a high quality. Teachers challenge children's perceptions and have high expectations of the level of engagement in their learning. Pupils are encouraged to explore concepts through activities which give them time to learn in depth. Rigorous assessment enables pupil's progress to be tracked across the school and to identify areas for further improvement which is moderated to ensure consistency of approach.

Pupils enjoy the subject and are keen to be fully involved in lessons, often making thoughtful and sensitive contributions. One pupil said, 'RE is one of my favourite lessons because it is fun and helps us to learn all about Christianity and the other religions.'

Religious education makes an excellent contribution to the promotion of the Christian ethos through the opportunities that arise in lessons for pupils to widen their learning by exploring moral and social issues frequently linked to the core Christian values. The collaborative nature of the leadership of RE means that there is a consistency of approach to teaching and learning and a sound understanding of pupils' attainment.

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

The leadership and management, including governors, have a strong commitment to the ongoing development of the Christian ethos. The headteacher has ensured that the school has fully addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection and has also introduced initiatives that are successfully meeting the raised expectations of the current inspection criteria. This has meant that the school has made good progress since the previous inspection with the leadership maintaining a clearly articulated vision for the school as a church school. One example of this is the creation of a set of values for the school which underpin the school's Christian ethos and impact positively on the children's social, moral and cultural development.

Self-evaluation as a church school is rigorous and contributes to the overall school development cycle. This ongoing cyclical process ensures that the leadership and management have an excellent grasp of their strategic role in continual development as a church school. An important aspect of this is an emphasis on training and staff professional development. Through this training, the leadership is aware of the need to ensure that the RE curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure that it reflects latest developments from the diocese and nationally and are pro-active in this regard.

As well as the mutually supportive links with the local parish church there are strong links with the diocese and neighbouring schools. All staff are very supportive of the school ethos providing inspiration for the high standards of behaviour. Relationships with the parents are excellent and they appreciate the wide variety of experiences offered by the school as well as the approachability of the headteacher and staff. As a parent commented, 'It's a very interactive school, the atmosphere is fantastic, and everyone is treated as an individual.' Another said, 'Children are aware of expectations, it's like one big family and the staff make it an interesting experience for the children.' Pupils say that they have an effective voice in the school, that the School Council members are listened to and their comments taken seriously and acted upon.

Collective worship and RE, which meet statutory requirements, are very well led and managed. They contribute enormously to pupils' understanding of Christian values.

SIAMS Report October 2017 Saint John the Baptist CE Primary School, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE12 1JQ