

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Boxford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Stone Street, Boxford, Suffolk CO10 5NP

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Suffolk
Date of inspection	20 June 2017
Date of last inspection	May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 124691
Headteacher	Justine Davies
Inspector's name and number QA Assessor	Stella Hart Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Boxford serves a rural community. There are 213 pupils on roll, from Reception to Year 6, who are almost all from a White British background with little ethnic diversity. There are a small number of pupils for whom English is not their first language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or are in receipt of pupil premium funding is below average. The headteacher took up her substantive post in September 2016. Two assistant headteachers were appointed during the same year.

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

- The headteacher's vision and drive in leading a distinctive church school is well supported by senior leaders, staff and governors.
- Relationships between all members of this church school community are positive, based on mutual respect and trust.
- The variety of Christian experiences offered by the 'Open the Book' team and local clergy in collective worship has deepened pupils' knowledge of the Bible.
- The distinctive Christian values, such as forgiveness and compassion, have a positive impact upon all groups of learners and their achievements. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that pupils have a variety of regular occasions to plan and lead collective worship to support their spiritual development.
- Extend the range of monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and religious education [RE] in this church school.
- Embed the nurture of pupils' personal spirituality to help them in their daily lives.

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

Governors, staff and parents are fully behind the new headteacher's drive and enthusiasm to give Boxford Primary School a new shared vision. Relationships, based on mutual respect and trust, are very supportive within the school community. One parent spoke of her 'absolute faith' in senior leaders and governors, who are 'doing a great job'. The school's ethos is based on distinctive Christian values of compassion, generosity, truthfulness, forgiveness and respect. These values are clearly expressed by all members of the school. Pupils recognise the impact of the 'Values for Life' programme, with one pupil describing the school as a 'peaceful place' with 'not many arguments'. Whilst referring to the Christian concept of 'forgiveness' another pupil said, 'We do always need to forgive people.' Pupils talk positively about their teachers and staff, with one pupil commenting on 'the people who look after us.' Staff too feel that Boxford is a great place because, 'Everyone is there for you'.

Parents recognise the impact that Christian values have upon their children, with a parent commenting on the value of 'friendship' that her child had 'taken it to heart'. The school's distinctive Christian character underpins its pastoral approach to all matters relating to pupils' wellbeing and behaviour with staff taking time to work with pupils and families in need of individual support. As a result, all groups of pupils make sustained progress and achieve well. There is an open-door policy with all staff committed to being a visible presence for parents before or after school. The outcome of this has been the development of stronger relationships within the school community. Attendance is in line with the national average and there have been no exclusions.

Pupils' understanding of spirituality is limited, and although each classroom has a place for quiet reflection, these are not always valued by pupils or used as effectively as they could be. Current experiences for spiritual development rely more on impromptu opportunities than planned teaching within the curriculum. Plans to develop this further have been identified by leaders. Pupils understand the importance of charitable giving, with active support given to Christian Aid this term and other pupil-chosen charities and school-led appeals during the current year. This has resulted in pupils who are more aware of the needs of others, both locally and nationally. Learners behave well in class; they are positive about their teachers, and appreciate their care and support. Pupils feel that they generally get on well with each other and feel that 'there are not many fall-outs'. Leaders have correctly identified strategies to develop more structured experiences for pupils at lunchtime and playtime with distinctive 'play zones' in the playground and field. There are some well-placed quiet spaces outside, so that pupils can choose where to spend time with their friends. Consequently, pupils feel that Boxford is a safe and happy place.

Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and of diverse communities is limited, although there is evidence in their books of recent work on 'Pilgrimages' in RE and links with the feast of Epiphany in French lessons. In RE children learn about all the major world faiths and can articulate clearly some of their learning from recent topics. One pupil could describe in detail what he had learnt about The Salvation Army. RE lessons are generally seen as positive experiences by pupils, which have a tangible impact upon their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the Christian character of the school. Plans to purchase further RE resources and to use 'big books' in each class to record moments of awe and wonder have been identified by leaders for September 2017.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Collective worship is growing in its importance for all members of the school community. Most of the areas of development in the last inspection have been followed through. There is a recognition, however, that more progress needs to be made in order to develop worship that is consistently vibrant and alive. Over the last two years, staff and clergy have worked together to develop a varied and structured programme. This includes regular biblical teaching by the clergy in collective worship and a newly established 'Open the Book' team. Pupils also talk enthusiastically about 'Open the Book' team, saying collective worship on Thursdays is 'interesting and funny' but 'sometimes serious'. They enjoy acting as characters in Bible stories. A pupil described the impact of teaching from the Bible thus: '[It] gives you a feel for what you're supposed to do.' Another pupil said: 'We are taught in school how to behave.' A foundation governor described progress over the last two years as 'transformational'. As a result, pupils' knowledge of the Bible has increased through the more varied programme of worship offered. There is a focal point for worship in the hall, with a candle lit and some Bibles on the small table, which helps to set a calm atmosphere for pupils to worship and reflect. Pupils are responsible for setting up resources for collective worship but pupils leading worship from the front is currently limited. Some older pupils do not fully value collective worship, feeling that it makes little difference to their lives. As a result of self-evaluation, leaders have identified the model of 'gathering, engaging, responding and sending' to enhance worship experiences for the school community. The school celebrates the main Christian festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter in the church with parents attending. Parents appreciate links with the local church and feel that this is a valuable 'part of schooling' which is 'not glossed over'. Good examples of this are 'Easter Experiences' in the church and local grounds, and a Nativity play by the younger pupils in the church at Christmas. Year 5 and 6 pupils distribute boxes of food to the

elderly after the Harvest Festival each year. Whilst pupils can describe some attributes of Jesus as 'kind', 'trustworthy', 'kind', and 'helpful, their understanding of His significance in worship is not as yet fully understood. Pupils' current understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is limited. Since the last inspection, the school has been slower to make progress in involving pupils in the planning and presentation of worship. A 'faith team' comprising of eight Year 5 pupils has been established. This is in its infancy, with future plans by leaders to embed regular pupil-led worship. Formal occasions for prayer and reflection take place during collective worship and before pupils have their lunch. Leaders recognise that there has not been a consistent culture of prayer and reflection in the school and are actively seeking to develop this in conjunction with the 'faith team'. At present, monitoring and evaluation of collective worship does not fully involve governors or pupils in a regular and systematic way. This has been identified as a vital part of the school's self-evaluation process. In order to enrich pupils' spiritual development, leaders propose to take the 'faith team' to see another school's exemplary practice later in 2017. Currently, this is not in place.

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

The headteacher is currently seeking the views of parents, governors, staff and pupils, so that the school's new vision will be a shared one. Two newly appointed assistant headteachers are fully supporting the headteacher in her commitment to the future wellbeing of Boxford Primary School. This has resulted in a cohesive senior leadership team. All leaders can clearly articulate the impact of Christian values on learners' lives and that of the wider school community. However, this is not yet fully underpinned by a clearly defined Christian vision, which can cohesively hold the values together. It is clear that the school is working together as a strong team. For example, the whole school community has shown great compassion to families in some recent difficult situations. Parents are appreciative of this, with one commenting that the rector 'does not turn down a request'. Staff, governors and parents feel that the role the school plays is very important to the village, with a governor describing links with the church as 'a two way street'. A parent notes the school is 'integrated into village life'. For example, events in the church for the school are valued by parents, with particular mention are recent celebrations of Christian festivals and concerts by the older pupils.

The school's ethos and values encompass a commitment to the achievement of all pupils. Recent self-evaluation has been rigorous and the leaders know their school well and have identified clearly how to move it forward. This includes developing a systematic monitoring of RE and collective worship, to inform future practice and achieve more meaningful learning experiences for this church school community.

Whilst RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements, governors are seeking to raise the profile of RE and collective worship within the school. They are fully supportive of the headteacher, who is the current leader of RE and collective worship. Curriculum time and resources have been identified to raise standards further.

Consequently, the headteacher will have some non-contact time to teach RE in two classes in the next academic year. At the same time, another teacher will take on the subject leadership of RE. Suitable training has been identified to support her in this role. Currently, this is not in place. Higher level teaching assistants, who teach RE, have benefitted from training and support. Leaders are aware of the need to access relevant training in order to build capacity within the school towards developing future leaders of church schools. Professional development has been identified for the future, using either the diocese or external providers. Closer partnership with other local church schools in sharing training and good practice is seen as a positive step forward. Currently, this is not in place.

SIAMS report June 2017 Boxford Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Stone Street, Boxford, CO10 5NP