

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wilby Church of England VC Primary School

Wilby, Eye, IP21 5LR

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Suffolk

Date of inspection

23 February 2018

Date of last inspection

21 November 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

VC Primary 124747

Headteacher

Roisin Wiseman

Inspector's name and number

Linda Russell 893

School context

Wilby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller than average primary school. There are 58 full time and 11 part time pupils on roll with 17% having special educational needs and 15% being eligible for pupil premium. The majority of pupils do not live in the catchment area. The school attainment scores in reading in 2017 placed it in the top 1% of primary schools in England.

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

- The highly motivated and dedicated headteacher and governing body have a truly shared vision and strategy for moving the school forward as a church school which gives clear direction to all.
- The pupils have a highly developed respect for diversity and difference within the church and other communities which is impressive in a monocultural rural school.
- The strong Christian character and caring ethos of the school, demonstrated through positive relationships, enables all pupils to achieve and make excellent progress.
- The involvement of pupils in worship monitoring demonstrates its centrality and importance and impacts positively on pupils' spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Model the exemplary practice in whole school worship to further develop the outside area for worship and reflection in order for it to make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional development.
- Further develop pupils' understanding of the impact of Christian values on their daily lives in order for them to be able to explain the relevance in terms of their behaviour and attitudes.

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

'Dream big, work hard' is the inspirational school motto, written by the pupils and expanded on in the school vision which is taken from the Biblical text 'Whatever you do, work at it with your heart in all the work you are doing, work the best you can' *Colossians 3,23*. A strong commitment to developing the whole child, ensuring their wellbeing, underpins everything the school does and is firmly rooted in Christian love. This ensures that all make excellent progress from their starting points as can be seen in validated data. Parents and staff are united in attributing this to the strong focus on the Christian values of love and compassion. Vulnerable pupils make accelerated progress from their starting points through carefully tailored individualised programmes which are rigorously monitored. As a result of a positive learning environment which encourages pupils to engage and strive to do their best, work is of a high standard and pupils demonstrate a fascination for learning and pride in their work. Pupils say they feel safe and valued, consequently attendance is good and pupils feel empowered to express themselves. Pupils take on many roles within the school, including collective worship leads. These pupils have had an immediate impact in strengthening the distinctive Christian character of the school, leading the Bishop of Dunwich to note on a recent visit that 'the Christian ethos of the school was palpable - not only in terms of the displays and environment, but particularly in the engagement of the pupils in worship, prayer and conversation.' The school council were instrumental in promoting the provision of free after school clubs because they felt that some pupils were being denied opportunities and this went against the Christian value of justice. Behaviour and relationships are excellent, with the behaviour policy rooted in the Christian value of forgiveness, so pupils know they can start each day afresh. Parents note a strong moral code being developed and attribute the excellent behaviour to strong Christian values evident within the school, although pupils are less able to articulate the impact of specifically Christian values on their daily lives. Responsibility is taken very seriously with pupils recognising the importance of being a good role model and many take on the role of playground buddies - 'we are a church school so it's good to take care of each other.' Pupils say that they can approach any member of staff if they have a concern or worry because 'we are respected and trust they will help'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils is a high priority and these aspects are embedded across all curriculum areas, contributing to the inclusive atmosphere that is valued by all. Parents speak enthusiastically about the wide range of educational visits that are provided such as visits to places of worship. This has enabled pupils to identify the main faiths that are practised in Britain today and resulted in the production of an interfaith calendar. As a result of the religious education (RE) curriculum, pupils have a highly developed respect for and understanding of diversity and difference and know that Christianity is a worldwide faith. Pupils see the importance of RE, saying that through their learning they are able to have a greater understanding of religious practice, with one child noting how many religions in the world have a special text or book to guide believers, 'like Christians have the Bible'. Through RE, they are able to confidently express themselves, 'I like the New Testament best because the Old Testament is a bit gory!' Pupils respond positively to RE learning which is shown by the high-quality responses recorded in scrapbooks. Pupils support a number of charities and talk enthusiastically about their link with Mogonjet School in Kenya 'because we go to a Christian school and we want to share'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is firmly rooted in Christian values and uses Bible stories effectively. Pupils are not only able to recall a number of favourite Bible stories but can talk about the symbolism and messages they contain. Pupils readily use the language they hear in collective worship to express their feelings, 'we see how to follow Jesus and how to forgive'. Worship is well planned by all staff. The structure of worship is rooted in Anglican practice, for example using liturgical language, and reflection impacts positively on all members of the community. Christian values are displayed permanently all around the school with pupils identifying those that they have been introduced to through worship. Parents comment on how much they value the half termly letter from the incumbent which encourages them to talk about worship themes at home. The involvement of pupils in whole school worship planning and monitoring is impressive. Pupils value the opportunities they have to lead worship. Under the guidance of a member of staff, elements of the worship are selected, reflected upon and delivered confidently to the school community. The ability to plan and lead worship in school and in the local church through becoming members of the 'Cool Team' (collective worship leads) has powerfully impacted upon self-esteem and well-being at the same time as increasing pupils' understanding of the key aspects of worship - 'watching the first ever worship presented by the team has inspired me to become a member'. Prayers written by pupils, displayed around the school, show they are able to use prayer to demonstrate Christian values such as forgiveness, thankfulness and compassion. The use of visual prompts has helped pupils have a good understanding of the nature and purpose of prayer. 'Prayer is when you talk to God and I now do it with my mummy.' Music and candles are used very effectively to set the tone for worship, supporting pupils in their spiritual development, 'God is with us in our worship, that's why we light a candle'. Learners recognise the Trinity and demonstrate a good understanding of this. The incumbent is involved in delivering worship at school and conducts services for pupils at the local church. All major festivals are celebrated

in church together which ensures all stakeholders gain further insight into Anglican practice. In addition, the church hosts 'experience days' which enrich pupils lives and also give insight into the church year. A range of staff and visitors, such as the Christian Youth Ministry, enable pupils to have a rich experience of worship styles. Worship is effectively monitored by staff, pupils and governors and this makes a valuable contribution to the development of the school. Worship fully complies with legal requirements.

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

Through the committed, inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the school celebrates its foundation status proudly for the benefit of all. Christian language is used unashamedly giving the clear message, which all stakeholders understand, that this is a church school where 'we live out and promote a vision that is firmly rooted in Christian values'. All stakeholders are clear that it is through strong leadership that Christian distinctiveness has been given a much higher profile and Christian values are at the heart of this inclusive school. Parents particularly like the family atmosphere that the headteacher has promoted. 'She really cares' was a comment both by pupils and parents. The provision, free of charge, of a breakfast club and extended school hours is an expression of the Christian value of service. The headteacher has worked with staff and governors to develop a robust monitoring programme. Consequently, there is a truly shared vision for this church school that informs everything it does. Staff say that the headteacher has faith in the team and leads by example and this motivates them as they 'feel part of something special here'. Performance management applies to all staff, strengthening the united team further, raising expectations and enabling everyone to maintain focus on the centrality of the Christian vision. Policies are rooted in the school's Christian values and the daily interactions between all show that these values are deeply embedded within the fabric of the school. Parents feel that all staff have the same hardworking attitude and welcoming manner as the headteacher. Leaders have ensured that the key points for development highlighted in the last church school inspection have been fully addressed. Governors give a strong Christian lead which is informing all aspects of their work, especially when looking to the future and their appointments. Minutes show that all governors have good oversight of all aspects of the school which gives them a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are well-informed and this enables them to balance challenge and support effectively. All governors are fully involved in monitoring and school development planning which has a real focus on the school's Christian foundation. The creation of an ethos committee adds strength to the school's distinctiveness and has resulted in changes that have improved the recording of pupils RE work. Leadership of RE has been retained by the headteacher and, together with her leadership of collective worship, sends out a powerful message to the community that these areas are central to the life of this school and have a high status. The school receives good support from local faith groups and clergy, especially when pupils are invited to contribute to services. In addition to the regular support for collective worship, there are many visits to the local church. Pupils' work is regularly displayed in the church and provides a forum for discussion amongst the church community, enabling pupils to contribute to village life. Half termly prayer meetings contribute significantly to staff wellbeing and are highly valued by those who attend. There is an investment in high quality professional development provided by the diocese with whom there are strong and valued links. This has empowered staff and governors in developing the Christian character and ethos of the school further. Regular feedback ensures that all staff are able to talk confidently about initiatives and understand their role such as the ReflectEd approach to learning with a focus on the Christian value of perseverance in conjunction with York and Durham universities. Leaders actively support and contribute to local networks. For example, the headteacher has led training on behalf of the diocese because it is recognised that she has a clear understanding of Christian distinctiveness. The strength of the governing body can be seen as they are used by the local authority to support other governing bodies in developing effective practice.