

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cockfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary	Church Lane, Cockfield, Suffolk IP30 0LA
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Suffolk
Date of inspection	14 October 2016
Date of last inspection	September 2011
School's unique reference number	124694
Headteacher	Trudie Harkin
Inspector's name and number	Graham Lancaster 713

School context

Cockfield is a smaller than average primary school with four mixed aged classes for the 61 pupils on roll. It serves the local villages in the vicinity. The school was previously a first school but the age range has been extended since the last inspection to include Years 5 and 6. The proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those entitled to pupil premium are below the national average. The proportion with special educational needs is broadly in line. The headteacher has been in post for three years. The majority of teachers have also been appointed since the previous inspection as has the incumbent.

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

- The strong partnership between the church and the school ensures that the Christian ethos is appreciated and understood by all members of the school community.
- Pupils' behaviour, including their attitudes to learning, is exemplary and they respond with openness and enthusiasm to the broad curriculum, including the effective religious education (RE) provision.
- Development of pupils' spirituality is actively promoted through the physical environment as well as through collective worship.

Areas to improve

- Identify a core group of Christian values that can be known and understood by all members of the school community.
- Introduce systematic evaluation of collective worship to ensure that future development is informed by all stakeholders.
- Share best practice in relation to areas for reflection within classrooms to provide consistent opportunities for all pupils to pray and deepen their spiritual development.

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

Expectations of all pupils are high. The slippage in outcomes in attainment in Upper Key Stage 2 in 2016 has been effectively addressed and close monitoring is in place to ensure this is maintained. One parent governor expressed his confidence by saying, 'my daughter is in that class and I am very pleased with the progress she is making. I genuinely believe that the Christian values underpin the effective education in this school.' The school's vision statement is known and endorsed by all stakeholders. Provision for pupils with additional needs is highly effective. Pupils are keen to be at school. Consequently, attendance is above the national average and there have been no permanent exclusions. The Christian ethos of the school is firmly established. It underpins the caring and welcoming atmosphere of the school and the strong sense of community which is immediately appreciated by parents new to the school. As one parent reported 'as soon as I visited the school I knew that I need look no further. The school has been instrumental in us quickly becoming members of the village community'. Parents particularly appreciate the way in which pupils value and respect one another, which they attribute directly to the Christian ethos. Although the Values for Life are prominently displayed and are visited systematically in collective worship these are too numerous for pupils to hold on to in a meaningful way. Consequently they struggle to remember them and to make a connection with their scriptural foundation. Shared areas around the school contain attractive and stimulating pieces of pupils' art work in a variety of media which actively contribute to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a strength of the school. High quality teaching and learning in RE contributes to pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and effectively supports the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Pupils' knowledge of other major world religions is good. The school provides a number of opportunities to deepen pupils' spirituality. Reflection areas are regularly used by pupils. They vary in effectiveness, but several include challenging questions and inspirational images as well as prompts for prayer. In response to a focus on very important people (VIPs) one reception pupil had said, 'to God we are all very special'. Another reflected, 'without any people God must have felt lonely'. The Pupil Council contributes to determining the choice of a wide range of local, national and international charities the school supports. Through this they experience the values of compassion, generosity and sharing. Many pupils take advantage of opportunities for broader personal development through the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary, including their very positive attitudes to learning. This is founded on the Christian values and nurtured through the high expectations of staff.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The worship programme has a high priority in school life. It is led by a range of staff and visitors, including members of the church. Sessions led by the local vicar and Open the Book are particularly appreciated by pupils. They recognise that worship helps them reflect on important issues, often based on biblical stories and the teaching of Jesus. This enables them to consider national and international events from a Christian perspective. Parents attend worship in good numbers when invited and particularly so for special services in church. The worship programme currently provides limited opportunities to explore the Christian concept of the Trinity. Pupils join in spontaneously with songs which are played as they come in. There is a clear sense of expectation that this is a very important part of each day. A focal point for worship is prominent, including a candle to support prayer and reflection. Pupils have a secure understanding of Anglican traditions such as, for example, the use of different coloured cloths reflecting different times of the Christian year. Sharing an opening and closing sentence with responses is embedded into practice. On a weekly basis WOW awards are presented. These include recognition of pupils who have actively demonstrated the Christian values. Other pupils show enthusiastic support for

their peers, underlining the depth of relationships which exist throughout the school. Planning for collective worship is comprehensive and ensures co-ordination between the varied leaders. However, planning is flexible when required. Recently a pupil arrived at school deeply concerned at the impact of a particular natural disaster. Their teacher facilitated a class discussion grappling with the key question of why a loving God would allow this to happen. This culminated in pupils writing their own prayers which, in turn, became the central focus of whole school worship that day. Pupils participate with enthusiasm and are taking increasing responsibility for some aspects of worship. Plans for pupils to lead collective worship are at an early stage of implementation.

A log of pupil response to worship has been recently introduced. Opportunities are provided for pupils to provide feedback, which is acted upon. At present evaluation of collective worship does not involve governors or parents in a systematic way.

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

The headteacher and local vicar, who is also chair of governors, have formed a highly effective partnership. This has enabled them to address evident dips in effectiveness successfully, without any detraction from the school's Christian distinctiveness. Strong leadership extends beyond them to senior staff and to other members of the governing body, including foundation governors, who are all highly committed to the success of the school. They know their school very well and provide both support and challenge as appropriate. The school provides a valued link between the church and the local community and successfully promotes special events in the church's calendar. Formal training and additional external support has been fully utilised to develop both the effectiveness of the school as a whole and the quality of collective worship and RE. Future church school leaders are given opportunities to develop their skills, for example by taking increasing responsibility for RE. Leaders fully utilise support from external agencies such as the diocese. Policies for collective worship and RE are comprehensive and contain clear statements of intent such as 'provide a strong foundation for underpinning the Christian ethos of the school and promoting pupils' SMSC development.' Leaders ensure such statements are realised by setting high expectations and providing focussed support as required.

Areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have been successfully addressed. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to the clear identification of priorities for future development. Plans for improvement are challenging but realistic, with clear timescales and measures of success. Leaders recently carried out a pupil quiz for RE and collective worship. The majority of pupils reported that they enjoy both and almost all that the school and church work together. It included probing questions such as, 'why do we pray?' and statements such as, 'I know how well I am doing in RE'. Outcomes were discussed by governors and plans agreed to address the gaps in pupils' understanding and knowledge agreed. The process is due to be repeated in the spring to measure the impact of actions taken. However, Governors have identified introducing a more systematic approach to their own monitoring and evaluation as a priority. All staff work very well as a team and their relationships exemplify the Christian ethos of the school.