

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

### Leadenham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Main Street  
Leadenham  
Lincolnshire  
LN5 0QB

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lincoln</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Date of inspection	1 December 2017
Date of last inspection	11 September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 120604
Headteacher	Matthew Nicholson
Inspector's name and number	Garth Hicks 901

#### School context

Leadenham Church of England Primary School serves the community of Leadenham and the surrounding rural area. It is significantly smaller than the average size primary school, with 46 pupils on roll. There are very few pupils who come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional support funding, called pupil premium, is slightly above the national average and the proportion of pupils identified as requiring support for special educational needs is well above the national average. The headteacher has been in post for 2 years.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Leadenham Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Relationships at all levels of the school community are embedded in the school's Christian ethos and the high standard of behaviour in the school reflects the school's Christian values.
- A set of core values, underpinned by Christian teaching, are central to the life of the whole school community.
- Collective worship makes a valuable contribution to the children's growing awareness of spirituality and how Christian values help them to lead better lives.
- The commitment of school staff to improving the distinctive Christian character of the school is evident as this continues to grow in all areas of the school's life.

#### Areas to improve

- To enable children to explore their understanding of both the Anglican Church and Christianity as a global faith.
- To enable children to have greater opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship linked to the school's core Christian values.
- To enhance the teaching of religious education to enable children to have greater opportunities to make links between what they can learn from religion and how this might impact their own lives.
- To ensure that the whole school community is involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's Christian character in order to support strategic planning as a church school.

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

The impact of the school's distinctive Christian ethos is good because a set of core values are underpinned by Christian teaching. These make a positive difference to important aspects of the life of the school. Children have a good understanding that values help them in their relationships with others and know that 'honesty helps people to own up and say sorry, so that people can forgive'. Everyone confidently articulates how the success of the school is firmly grounded on these shared Christian values. This success is reflected in the majority of pupils making good or better academic progress and many attaining beyond national expectations. Parents and children are clear that they know what the core values of the school are and explain the impact they have on children both at school and at home. This understanding contributes to the positive school environment in which children show excellent behaviour, are happy and feel safe and confident to share their views and opinions. Children also attribute this to embracing the school's Christian values and using them to help resolve any issues. This contributes to children's attendance which has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average.

Christian values are firmly established in the children's learning and give opportunities for teachers to explore them as part of their lessons. Regular 'Big Projects', such as the project on Mongolia, allow children time to reflect and ask questions. Comments from children include 'the big projects help me to be inspired'. The reflection areas around school provide many opportunities where children can further develop their knowledge and understanding of their own spirituality. The opportunities for reflection and prayer are particularly strong in the outside environment, especially through the use of the 'tree of special thoughts and prayers' and the woodland area.

The Christian character is particularly evident in the high quality of relationships across the whole school, where everyone is cared for and valued as an individual and where values are lived out and 'everyone looks after one another.' This is the result of the impact of Christian values being embraced by the whole school community which contributes to the school's 'inclusive family atmosphere'.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is given a high priority through a wide variety of carefully planned experiences using the outdoor environment, religious education and collective worship, that all make a significant contribution to shaping the distinctive Christian character of the school. Children recognise the importance of religious education in their lives and understand that it helps them to show an appreciation for others, with one child saying 'everyone should be friends, because we are all the same'. Enrichment in the teaching of religious education is enabling pupils to reflect on the similarities between major faiths and how these link to the school's Christian values. Children know that the world has great diversity and that this should be respected. This in turn, impacts on the way that they treat others within the school community.

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

Acts of worship are good because they very effectively promote the core Christian values. They provide time for children and adults to appreciate how biblical teaching supports their understanding of values and their relevance to their own lives. Children are acquiring a mature grasp of the values and how they support them. For example, they say that the story of Noah 'helps to remind us to show kindness to each other'.

Acts of worship give opportunities and space for children and adults to reflect on their thoughts and ideas about faith and belief which makes a positive impact on their spiritual development. Children and adults actively engage in worship, particularly through the enthusiastic singing of worship songs, interactive storytelling and prayer. Planning for collective worship is thorough and continually improving, as is governors monitoring of collective worship. Although children do not yet have sufficient opportunities to be involved in this planning or to lead and evaluate worship based around the school values. Key events in the church year enhance the distinctively Christian worship programme, enabling children to develop an understanding of Anglican tradition and practices at a local level. However, this understanding is not as developed at a national or global level. Children have a good understanding of the Trinity and were clearly able to explain it as God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As one child expressed, 'God comes in three different forms. We see them differently. Like running water, ice and steam'.

There are opportunities for children to pray throughout the school day both in acts of worship and at other times. Opportunities to share written prayers in collective worship help children articulate how prayer can be used in their own lives to say sorry or thank you.

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

Children make good progress in religious education (RE) to achieve standards that are at least in line with national age related expectations. They respond well to RE and show excitement and engagement in their learning, especially when lessons are outside or in the yurt. They have good subject knowledge and in some instances are beginning to apply this. For example, by using Bible stories to justify their arguments. Children's work is regularly assessed against the expectations of the syllabus and is used to identify their progress against national expectations. Assessment data is also used to track children's progress across the school.

Teaching across the school in RE is strong and teachers have a good understanding of how to effectively deliver the RE syllabus, which includes helping children to acquire specific skills and concepts that supports their learning in RE very well. This ensures that children have a secure knowledge of both Christianity and other world faiths as they begin to make connections in their learning in order to understand what they can also learn from religion and in turn, identify how this might impact their own lives.

Religious education has a high profile in school and is valued by children, staff and parents, due to the positive contribution that it has on the children's understanding of the school's Christian values and also to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Leadership of RE is currently shared between the subject leader and the headteacher. Monitoring and evaluation of RE takes place regularly and correctly identifies the subject's strengths and areas to improve. These include developing greater opportunities for the children to discover what they can learn from religion and also moderation of children's work, in partnership with other local schools.

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

The strong leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has made good progress in developing its distinctive Christian character since the previous inspection. He articulates and promotes a Christian vision that puts the holistic wellbeing of every child at the heart of all that the school does and is fully supported by the school governors. As one governor put it, 'every child should reach their true potential'. This enables Christian values and spirituality to make a positive difference to the lives of the whole school community.

Leadership and management are good because the shared leadership of RE and collective worship has been successful in leading the whole school community in creating a Christian ethos that has meaning and purpose for everyone. It is an inclusive ethos based on biblical teaching. The headteacher is fully supported by his staff and governors in constantly working to raise standards in pupil achievement. Formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the distinctively Christian ethos are in place and are regularly discussed by the governing body. However, the views of parents and children are not always included in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Governors work regularly in school to support collective worship and the teaching of RE and therefore appreciate how values and spirituality enhance experiences in the classroom. They clearly articulate how the Christian ethos makes a difference to the school's approach to relationships and behaviour. As a result of accurate self-evaluation, school leaders have a good understanding of how to continue to develop the school as a church school.

Links with local churches are strong. Clergy and other members of churches make a valuable contribution to the life of the school through their commitment and support of worship, RE lessons and professional development. The use of the church for key festivals in the Christian calendar is a good example of beneficial links between the two communities. These events are supported well by parents and therefore ensure a positive relationship between the school, the church and the local community.

The school has benefitted from support from the diocese which is helping to support leaders in the continuing development as a church school. Professional development of staff and governors ensures that they are up to date with the latest developments in supporting the teaching and assessment of RE.

The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.