



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Moorlands Church of England Primary Academy**

Moorland Way, Belton  
Great Yarmouth  
Norfolk  
NR31 9PA

**Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory**

**Current inspection grade: Satisfactory**

**Diocese: Norwich**

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Date of last inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010

School's unique reference number: 140189

Headteacher: Kevin Lee

Inspector's name and number: Gill Hipwell 480

### **School context**

Since being placed in Special Measures in October 2012 the school has had six headteachers. The current interim head, supported by an executive head from the academy trust, has been in post for five weeks. The local governing board is newly established. Staff turnover has been high, recruitment challenging and there are currently four newly qualified teachers in post. The incumbent has been a consistent presence in the school throughout the changes.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Moorlands as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

- Lack of consistent leadership and a strategic Christian vision has resulted in insecure progress and achievement for many pupils and in disaffection for some
- The focus on six core values in worship and across the whole curriculum has had a positive impact on behaviour and self esteem
- The high level of practical and spiritual support from the local church has enabled the school to retain its identity as a Christian community amidst the turbulence of change.

### **Areas to improve**

- Ensure that a shared and clearly articulated Christian vision underpins policy and practice so that all members of the school community can work in partnership to secure improvement
- Develop clear and robust procedures for strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian character so that leaders and managers at every level understand their role in securing and promoting the ethos of the school.

- Ensure that the core values are clearly identified in a Christian context to enable all adults and children to have a consistent and shared understanding
- Facilitate the sharing of good practice in embedding Christian values across the curriculum in order to maximise opportunities for pupils to develop personally and spiritually

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

Most pupils are positive about their school although some in Year 6 say they have had too many changes and that this can make them feel resentful. All ages say that focusing on the six core values has made the school 'better' and behaviour has improved noticeably. Staff concur with this and ensure that the values are reflected in every area of school life. Pupils of all ages name and explain the values confidently and many displays in all areas of the school reinforce the positive messages. Parents too have noticed the difference and say that their children talk about the core values at home. Relationships are good. Older pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility for younger ones and speak maturely of these roles. Pupils feel valued by staff and there is a great emphasis on respect for everyone. Pupils talk about diversity with understanding; one year 3 child related a modern version of The Good Samaritan – in this case a 'Hoodie' – explored in literacy. Pupils in Year 1 spoke with compassion and understanding about people they know who are different in some way. Reflection is encouraged throughout the day and there are dedicated areas in all classrooms as well as a labyrinth in the grounds. Pupils say that they appreciate opportunities to think and to pray and say that the reflection areas are well used in some classes. Religious education (RE) develops enquiry skills and fosters respect for belief. Pupils speak of some lessons where they explore different opinions and have the opportunity to decide for themselves. Pupils across the age range enjoy RE and say that it is relevant to them, teaching them about other faiths and cultures. A recent focus on moving attendance from satisfactory to good is supported by a member of staff taking on a dedicated role in supporting pupils and their families; early indications are of good impact. Standards of academic achievement and progress are variable and data in this area is not secure. Parents of younger children say that they are very happy with the progress their children are making and all parents seen by the inspector are cautiously optimistic that standards are rising, although they are fearful of the impact of any further changes of leadership.

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

Pupils of all ages enjoy collective worship, find it engaging and say that it makes them think about the choices they make. They speak enthusiastically about their weekly worship in the church and relate the Bible stories they have heard to the core values practised in school. Worship follows the pattern of the church's year and links with the school's six core values. The incumbent and church youth worker invest significant time in delivering and supporting worship both in church and at school. Acts of worship are truly collective, attended by teachers and support staff as well as members of the church community. Staff reinforce the messages shared in worship throughout the day and say that pupils are responsive and thoughtful. Pupils have a good understanding of the place and purpose of prayer, approaching public prayer on the day of inspection with a remarkable degree of sensitivity and respect in the midst of a lively act of worship. Pupils say that they appreciate the prayer time that some classes have at the start of the day and speak openly of the value of private prayer in school and at home. Leadership of collective worship has been affected by changes in headship but there is a coordinator in place who manages the practical aspects efficiently, ensures that worship is well structured and has put measures in place to seek and act upon pupil opinions. Pupils say that changes have been made as a result of their comments. Planning currently lies with the headteacher who sets the themes, although the incumbent has had some influence this term. Pupils participate with enthusiasm although they do not have many opportunities

for planning and leading at present and would like to be involved more. Older pupils talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and described an act of worship where a year 4 group shared their understanding of the Holy Trinity. Younger pupils speak confidently about God and Jesus, know that God is the Father and have some understanding of the Spirit working in people's lives. The role of governors in monitoring and evaluating collective worship as a key element of the school's Christian distinctiveness is underdeveloped.

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

Frequent changes of headteacher, high staff turnover and a recently remodelled local governing board (LGB) has had a detrimental impact on the ability of leaders and managers to articulate and deliver a consistent Christian vision. Strategic planning at LGB level is not focused on the Christian character of the school and there is a lack of monitoring around distinctiveness. In spite of this the school has retained strong and productive links with the local church which are praised by parents, staff and pupils. The church's commitment has ensured consistency of support for collective worship, religious education and staff wellbeing and as a result there is much good practice in these areas. The school and wider community are positive about the church's input and there is visible pride in the school's Christian foundation. The current staff team is harmonious and works well as a supportive unit where all are positive and proactive about the focus on core values instigated by the interim headteacher. There is some good practice in encouraging pupils to reflect on the core values in a Christian context as part of the wider curriculum. Leaders at all levels are addressing issues around poor progress and low academic standards although the impact of different approaches has not been fully evaluated to date. Leadership and management of religious education has been consistently strong and investment in training for the coordinator reflects the high status of the subject which is well taught across the school. In addition to practical and financial support from the local church there is significant input from the Diocese and links with other church schools. Parents remain worried about stability of staffing but praise the current team and say that they feel more involved and better informed than previously.

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