

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Moorlands Church of England Primary Academy

Moorland Way, Belton, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR31 9PA	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Norwich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Date of academy conversion	November 2013
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Norfolk Education and Academies Trust [DNEAT]
Date of inspection	25 January 2018
Date of last inspection	5 February 2015
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 140189
Headteacher	Kevin Lee
Inspector's name and number	Stella Hart 923

School context

Moorlands Church of England Primary Academy serves a village community near Great Yarmouth. It is a larger than average primary school for Norfolk with 362 pupils on roll aged from 2 to 11 years. The school became a sponsored academy in 2013, after it was deemed by Ofsted to require special measures. There were several changes in the leadership of the school until 2015. The current headteacher has been in post since June 2015, but was interim headteacher at the time of the last inspection. The deputy headteacher was appointed in the same year. Staffing has been stable and permanent since September 2016. The subject leader for religious education [RE] and collective worship was new in post in September 2017. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and disability [SEND] is slightly lower than national. The percentage of pupils on free school meals [FSM] is below national. There are a small number of pupils for whom English is not their first language.

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

- There is a strong commitment and vision from the headteacher and deputy headteacher in leading a distinctive church school, which is well supported by the whole-school community.
- Distinctive Christian values, such as compassion, honesty and respect, are being well used to create a nurturing environment, providing pupils with a firm foundation for life.
- Collective worship is well planned for by members of the school and clergy, which is leading to pupils' increased enjoyment of worship and their recognition of its importance in their lives.
- Robust self-evaluation by senior leaders has led to much-improved learning outcomes for pupils across the age ranges.

Areas to improve

- Find ways to energise worship, including opportunities for pupil leadership and better resources to support singing, in order to maximise pupils' spiritual experiences.
- Deepen pupils' personal experience and understanding of spirituality, embedding it across the curriculum to help them in their daily lives.
- Extend governors' strategic role in the systematic monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and RE as important aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness.

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

The school's distinctive Christian values are lived out through its chosen six: respect, responsibility, resilience, compassion, honesty and belief. These are well-embedded in all aspects of school life. The values have been instrumental in the school's 'healing journey' towards a nurturing environment where all can grow and flourish as God's children. The core values are clearly known and expressed by all members of the school. On the theme of resilience, one pupil said: 'Emperor penguins never give up. They can't let the egg drop.' Parents too feel that the core values have a positive impact upon their children, who readily tell them what they are learning. In keeping with the school's Christian values, leaders and governors have instilled a safe culture throughout the school.

Consequently, relationships are strongly based on mutual respect, with pupils who are courteous and polite, and happy to engage in conversation with others. After a period of turbulence, staffing within the school is now stable and permanent. Members of staff say there is a 'positive feeling' in school, and parents describe staff as 'happier, fresher and brighter'. Pupils say that behaviour in school is 'good' with isolated incidents of poor behaviour, which are handled by staff effectively. The outcome of this is that pupils feel that they are listened to by adults in school and are confident that appropriate action will be taken.

Community relationships are so much stronger than at the time of the last inspection, with parents appreciating the school's open-door policy, its communication via social media pages and a recent school app. This means that the wider community feels much better informed about the daily life of the school. A focus on the virtue 'empathy' has had a positive impact upon learners, who are proactively involved in projects reaching out to the wider local community. For example, older pupils speak enthusiastically about supporting the elderly in the village through 'Young at Heart' and about putting on a tea party for them. As part of National Poetry Day, pupils posted their own poems through residents' doors. Pupils are regularly involved in supporting 'The Village Pantry' food bank, showing compassion and care for those in need. Charitable giving, with active support for Christian Aid and other appeals is well-embedded into school life.

Pupils show a growing awareness of diversity and of current national concerns such as homelessness. A recent project was to write to Syrian refugees coming to Britain. Pupils' awareness of Christianity as a multicultural world faith is more limited at present but there have been opportunities for learners to show care towards children in China and to think about the persecuted church. Pupils have a growing understanding of spirituality and they are aware that their actions have consequences, with one pupil writing that, 'your deeds are monuments'. Each classroom has a dedicated space for quiet reflection, and prayers are written for thoughtful consideration, with one pupil writing, 'we pray for the homeless'. However, enriching experiences for learners' spiritual development are not yet systematically planned for across the curriculum.

In keeping with the school's Christian and inclusive ethos, attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. This is because children are happy and want to come to school. Incidents of bullying are rare but are dealt with swiftly and fairly, in keeping with the Christian ethos of forgiveness, respect and courage. Fixed-term exclusions are used effectively for a small number of pupils but only as a final sanction. There have been no permanent exclusions this academic year.

Religious education meets statutory requirements and evidence in the pupils' books demonstrates that the subject contributes positively to learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [SMSC]. For example, pupils can talk readily about recent topics such as 'Noah's Ark', 'eternal life' and 'the crucifixion'. However, pupils' enthusiasm for RE as a subject is more muted, with opportunities to widen pupils' SMSC development missed. The school's action plan has identified the teaching of religious education as one of its current priorities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils, staff and governors have positive attitudes to worship which plays an important role in school life. Worship is planned for regularly by staff and clergy and is focused on the school's core values and 'Values for Life' materials. All staff attend worship and contribute to the leading of it, which is indicative of its importance. The incumbent and youth worker are regular visitors to school, leading worship once or twice a week. As a result, pupils have clear systematic biblical teaching and variety within worship which contributes positively to their spiritual and personal development. There is a focal point for worship in the hall with a cross, and a candle is lit. Pupils are positive in their response to worship, describing it as a place, 'to come together to learn about Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit'. Another pupil said: 'I love assembly. [It's] a nice place to reflect on God.' Pupils have an understanding of the Trinity, mentioning that they have learnt about this in worship recently. One pupil described the Holy Spirit as the 'person of God in a different way' and another with the comment: 'God's on earth but He's in us.' There is a clear pattern for engagement in worship with formal prayer, song and teaching from the Bible but real vibrancy is lacking. Pupils describe some of the songs they sing with enthusiasm but materials to support singing are currently under-resourced. Pupils participate in worship by helping to act out stories, by reading Bible passages, and lighting the candle and responding in prayer together. However, pupils do not have opportunity to plan worship, take responsibility to lead it, or evaluate its impact. This means that their ability to grow as enthusiastic leaders within

worship is missed. There is a book of prayers in the foyer of the school, with pupils choosing to add their personal prayer each week but regular occasions for pupils to pray spontaneously in worship is not currently in place. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in worship every Monday morning. Parents are invited to attend when their children receive an award for their attitude or behaviour which highlights one of the school's Christian values. Parents value these occasions. Great use is made of the parish church for worship, with pupils visiting regularly each term, including the celebration of major Christian festivals, such as Easter and Harvest, and special occasions such as Ash Wednesday and Remembrance. Regular workshops at the church are planned by staff and clergy for all pupils, and space is available for prayer and reflection. Pupils are respectful in church where: 'God is seen as personal and Jesus is treated as real.' Pupils are enthusiastic about worship there, one saying: 'It feels like another place where we can worship', and another voicing the opinion: 'Worship is stronger there.' Monitoring and evaluation of worship is currently underdeveloped. However, a recently formed ethos group of governors and staff has been established to discuss ways to enhance worship further.

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

Since the appointment of its current headteacher nearly three years ago, the school has become stable with a positive and calm learning atmosphere. Staff, governors and parents all acknowledge the 'massive journey' the school has taken and describe the change as 'transformational' and a 'journey quite remarkable'. Parents say that the headteacher has been a 'breath of fresh air' who has 'delivered and stayed', but also acknowledge that: '[The] whole team have turned it.' They are confident in the leadership team and feel their concerns are listened to by senior leaders. Parents are kept well-informed about their children's progress. Annual surveys collecting views of parents have been analysed and acted upon, which has led to trust in the school and its leaders. The school's parent association supports the school through regular fundraising for the benefit of all. The school has a distinctive identity which is exemplified through its 'head, heart, hands' philosophy and its well-chosen vision: 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' The school's core values are well-interwoven into the curriculum. Governors describe a Christian ethos which 'permeates everything we do', strengthening policy and practice in this church school. Governors' meetings are underpinned by prayer. Self-evaluation strategies of leaders have been rigorous with on-going support from the diocese and DNEAT and from Her Majesty's Inspectors [HMI]. Governors are highly supportive of the school. As a result, attainment shows a much-improved picture for most groups of learners, especially in reading, with many pupils above the national standard by the end of Year 6 in 2017. Literature has been a main thrust of the school's work in the last few years, with well-chosen texts used to enthuse pupils with a love for learning linked to the school's core values. Inspirational visits by authors, and social media projects such as #mydadreads, #mymumreads, have led to pupils who are much more literate and passionate about their learning. There is regular and systematic tracking of pupil progress, with interventions tailored to support individual pupils. A School and Family Support Worker is employed by the school to pastorally support the most vulnerable within the wider-school community. Clergy add to the leadership capacity of the school, particularly in collective worship and RE. Currently, the regular monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work in RE by governors and staff is underdeveloped. An action plan is in place to support the worship and RE leader in her newly established role, and to raise the profile of worship and RE in this church school. School-to-school support is strong, with leaders of the school working with other DNEAT schools to share skills and expertise for the benefit of all learners. Pupils have been involved in wider diocesan projects, enjoying projects such as 'The Big Sing', sharing their Christian values with pupils from other church schools.

SIAMS report January 2018 Moorlands CE Primary Academy, Belton, NR31 9PA