



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Cawston Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Aylsham Road
Cawston
Norwich
NR10 4AY

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 9 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 9 July 2010

School's unique reference number: 121031

Headteacher: Kay Swann

Inspector's name and number: Christopher J Allen

School context

The school serves the Cawston community and surrounding area and educates 19 children from the market town of Reepham and 22 children from outside the school's catchment area. It is below average in size with 160 children on roll. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus, with a statement of special educational needs or eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has a close relationship with the parish church of St Agnes and maintained links during a period of change.

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

- The relationship with St Agnes Church and parish is strong and sustained.
- A culture of Christian fellowship has underpinned the school's capacity to address the recent challenges on achievement and progress.
- Foundation governance is outstanding. They serve the community of the school and support the collaborative leadership of the headteacher effectively.
- Collective worship is at the heart of school life.
- The social, cultural and moral learning experiences in the school contribute significantly to its Christian character.

Areas to improve

- Develop the opportunities pupils have to experience personal prayer and spirituality to ensure every pupil has quiet time to speak to God.
- Enable pupils to understand their Christian beliefs in a global context by exploring Christianity as a world faith and comparing it to other world faiths.
- Embed the strategic planning of the foundation governors within the school to ensure further improvement is focused on sustaining the best outcomes for every child.

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

The school has a clear set of aims and values that underpin the life of the school expressed in one simple motto 'Success in Working Together'. For example, values are clearly found in displays around the school. This is also characterised by kind and polite pupils who live out the school's Christian values making them feel safe and form strong relationships with every adult in the school. Through their manner and actions, caring staff emulate the drive and dedication of the headteacher to 'live out' the inclusive and friendly Christian ethos. The headteacher enables committed staff to encourage every child to succeed as they develop self-esteem, build positive relationships and a motivation for learning. In this way the school's Christian character makes a strong impact upon the personal development and well-being of all pupils. The school's Christian character has consistently contributed to improved outcomes for all pupils over the last two years. The school has above proportions of children achieving expected and more than expected progress at the end of key stage two compared to national expectations. Children in the early years and at the end of key stage one also achieve better than national expectations. The school's Christian character consistently informs its approach to attendance, with pupil persistent absence dropping over the last three years to match national expectations. Children who received free school meals significantly outperform their peers at national level, reflecting the ethos of inclusivity and school core value of 'Success by working together'. Religious education enables pupils to gain a growing respect for Anglican traditions in their local community. However pupils were clear they would like to understand how Christianity is played out as a global faith and how this compares to other world faiths in understanding diverse communities. Pupils work well together and support each other when they need help. However, less emphasis placed upon opportunities to reflect on deeper issues of meaning and purpose sometimes make the children feel their questions go unanswered. The focus on specific values in the worship programme as well as the co-ordination of opportunities for moral, social and cultural growth across the curriculum, has enabled the school to progress each pupil's emotional development. Personal spirituality is less prominent in the school and is recognised by the headteacher, pupils and governors as a development priority for the future. The school now plans to evaluate how explicit Christian values develop individual spirituality and underpin the promotion of the Christian ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils speak enthusiastically about their enjoyment of worship; one child said it was 'an amazing time full of the life of God'. The vicar leads worship regularly and special services are held in church. These occasions give positive messages about the strong relationship that exists between church and school as well as providing a good understanding of church tradition and developing a growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The attendance of many parents when worship is held in church reinforces the importance of the role of the local church within the whole school community.

The worship programme enables pupils to gain a clear understanding of the way in which the school's distinctive Christian values affect their lives. For example, one pupil explained how the hymn Building a House on a Sandy Shore taught them about perseverance and 'the adults in the school look for this in who we are'. Pupils regularly have responsibility for planning and leading worship on the theme of a Christian value, such as wisdom. They have a good understanding of what is involved and other children respond well to their questions. Songs clearly play a key part and help to promote Christian teaching and add to the spiritual atmosphere. This interactive approach is at the heart of the school's inclusive ethos and confirms the importance of worship in the life of the school. However, reflection was highlighted by some children as the next step in how worship needs developing further. There is a simple space that is used to reflect and pray in the school's main entrance but children would like greater opportunities to reflect personally and spiritually in their classes. A focus for development arising from the previous inspection for pupils to have more opportunities to be involved in taking an active role in worship has been addressed. Since the last inspection the worship programme has been

rewritten and the revised themes are each based on a different Christian value linked with Bible stories. The introduction of a weekly eco worship celebrates the care of God's world within the school community. Recognition of pupils living through the values explored in worship, by becoming star of the week or citizen of the week, underpin the changes introduced since the last inspection. By doing this, the pupils explore and gain a growing understanding of the meaning of each value and seek out these values in one another. Pupils recalled stories they had heard and could relate the meaning of the value to their own lives and why a fellow pupil may be recognised and celebrated through writing a compliment about them.

The worshipping life of the school is vibrant because of the frequent conversations between headteacher and vicar that continually review and revise pupils' experiences. The effectiveness of the programme has advanced considerably since the last inspection but pupils have too few opportunities to monitor worship formally alongside governors. The vicar's strategic vision for the school is illustrated in the clear plan for how worship can continue to embed the values shared between school, church and community through the work of a new associate priest appointed to work with the school.

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

The dedicated headteacher has a clear vision of the way distinctive Christian values are lived out in the daily life of the school. She has the full support of staff and governors in developing this vision. Through collaborative leadership and sensitive coaching and mentoring of new staff, all staff feel empowered within the school. A parent commented on how 'the headteacher knew every pupil and was a visible presence in the daily life of the school'. This made the children feel cared for and safe. This contributes to the nurturing Christian ethos based upon commitment and team work of all members of the school's community and creates a strong sense of unwavering support for pupils and their families. As many parents stated the school is 'one big family living in God's creation'.

Supportive and committed foundation governors make a significant contribution to the leadership of the school and regularly monitor the distinctiveness it offers. In order to gain a clearer understanding of the school's effectiveness as a church school, they understand the need to embed a self-evaluation programme that involves pupils in securing the impact of the Christian ethos on personal development, academic achievement and wellbeing. Governors support the headteacher in recognising the benefit of developing staff and governors as leaders of church schools and encourage opportunities for professional and personal training. The school has strengthened the support it accesses from the diocese of Norwich, through leadership programmes, professional development and advisory support. This has had a positive impact on the school's provision as a church school, for example the school has become part of a network of church schools it can draw on good practice and share ideas with. The school has addressed this area of development from the last inspection.

The strong partnership between the school and St Agnes parish church has formed the foundation upon which the many linked activities with the church and community have been developed. An example is the Holy Week Project undertaken this year where the children 'walked through' the Easter Story in church. The vicar, who is also a governor and appointed since the previous inspection, is a regular and welcome visitor who is highly respected as the physical and visible presence of the church. As well as providing pastoral support his involvement in the development of worship and teaching key theological concepts such as the Trinity has resulted in highly effective practice in this area. Parents recognise the value of the links between school and church and appreciate the resulting benefits for their children that arise. Examples of the range of community links, includes fund raising for different charities such as the local food bank at harvest, holding a community Christingle service for the Children's Society at Christmas and hosting the congregation of St Agnes's in the school hall during the winter months for their regular services.'

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.

SIAMS report July 2015 Cawston CE Primary School, Norwich NR10 4AY