

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Morland Church of England VA Primary School

Morland Road Ipswich IP3 0LH

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Satisfactory

Diocese

St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

N/A

Local authority

Suffolk

Date of inspection

6 June 2017

Date of last inspection

N/A

Type of school and unique reference number

VA Primary 141125

Headteacher

Alison Warren

Inspector's name and number

Gill Hipwell 480

School context

This school of 414 pupils, including those in the nursery, changed status from community to Church of England VA in September 2014. The current headteacher has been in post since April 2017, having previously been part of a stable and long-serving leadership team. An interim parish priest is in post to cover an interregnum. The local community suffers significant social deprivation and pupil premium payments are above national averages. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is high for Suffolk. A significant proportion of pupils have individual learning plans. Progress at Key Stage 2 (KS2) in 2016 was above average for Suffolk in reading and maths but well below for writing. KS2 outcomes were just below Suffolk averages which were themselves just below national averages. The parish church and the local Evangelical Church, which is just across the road, play a significant role in school life.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Morland as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Distinctively Christian values are known, shared and expressed in every aspect of the school life.
- Relationships securely rooted in trust and respect underpin everything and enable pupils and adults to respond to challenges with confidence.
- Investment in religious education (RE), including significant professional development, has had a positive impact on teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Christian worship sets the tone for behaviour.
- Consistent support from the deanery and the diocese has provided stability during a period of unsettled leadership.

Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for the exploration of the school's aims and vision to ensure that leaders and others have a shared understanding of its Christian mission and purpose.
- Strengthen the strategic role of governors in securing the Christian distinctiveness of the school so that they become an integral part of the improvement and development cycle.
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is robust, focused, consistent and inclusive of pupils so that good feedback informs improvement.
- Support the ongoing development of RE through allocating designated leadership time.
- Develop the use of quiet areas to enable pupils to grow in their understanding of personal prayer and reflection.

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

Distinctively Christian core values are prominently displayed, expressed, and celebrated by the whole community. Posters around the school link individual values to biblical texts, although some pupils do not find the language used accessible. However, boards in each classroom which focus on the current core value are very well used, with pupils adding their own thoughts on a daily basis. The extent to which these values are embedded in school life has an exceptional impact on levels of trust amongst and between pupils and staff. Challenges are met confidently because success is understood to come from perseverance. Pupils say that 'lovely teachers' make them look forward to coming to school; data shows that attendance is good. Pupils also comment on interesting lessons with 'special bits just for me' and say that they 'like to learn'. From low starting points, and supported by a policy of individual learning programmes, most groups of pupils make good progress in reading and maths. Progress in writing has historically been weak; this is being addressed consistently, rigorously and imaginatively and consequently outcomes are showing improvement. The extent to which values are explored in worship, through religious education (RE) and across the curriculum results in a shared understanding of both the biblical roots of the school's values as well as their importance to individuals and the community. Pupils' understanding of service and responsibility, for example, is well developed and even the youngest can relate this to the teaching of Jesus. They can explain how their giving to charity and the roles they undertake in school are an expression of this. Relationships are warm and respectful, leading to good behaviour. Pupils say that bullying is rare and disputes are always dealt with immediately and appropriately. Experiences within and beyond the curriculum support pupils' understanding of and appreciation for the world around them and the people they meet. There is a degree of religious and cultural diversity in the community which is appropriately and respectfully celebrated. Pupils identify RE as 'really important because we find out why people do things'. RE promotes respect for personal faith and belief and gives pupils opportunities to look at Christian customs and culture in a broad context, including world-wide. The school environment includes a range of Christian displays and symbols, although neither adults nor pupils identify these as opportunities for pupils to engage with their own spirituality. A beautiful quiet garden is loved by pupils but not considered by them to be a place for spiritual thought or prayer.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Regular, daily worship is distinctively Christian. The inspector experienced engagement, respect and reverence, something that pupils, staff and clergy agree has developed significantly as a result of the new headteacher's expectations. Pupils say that they enjoy worship, identifying the exploration of values in the context of the Bible as their favourite aspect. Adults say that, whatever their personal views on Christian belief, they are collectively supportive and value worship as a time to reflect. Leadership of whole-school worship rests principally with the headteacher and local churches, although other staff take responsibility for key stage and class worship, sometimes involving pupils. Pupils say that they would like to take on more responsibility for worship. In whole-school worship there is a strong focus on Bible stories, which are always linked to the core value for the half term, and values-based class worship builds on this. Early years worship is held separately and always focuses on Bible stories. Biblical literacy is further enhanced by fortnightly visits from an Open the Book team, provided by a neighbouring parish since the interregnum. Further support comes from the local Evangelical Church. Regular worship is developing a consistent structure which reflects Anglican practice. This is reinforced by festival celebrations in church and regular visits from the interim priest. Worship introduces pupils to the language of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some pupils have a basic level of understanding about what this might mean but it is neither consistent nor secure across the school. Pupils are beginning to become more familiar with prayer and quiet reflection. Learning the Lord's Prayer to sing in worship and establishing a pattern for class prayer before lunch and at the end of the school day has deepened pupils' understanding of the place and purpose of public prayer. Their understanding of private prayer and reflection is less well developed, although a few Christian parents said they had noticed that their children had begun to pray at home. Pupils say that they would like to have more places to sit quietly and think but they do not relate this to prayer or spiritual reflection. There is a nominated governor for collective worship who is also a member of staff. Although she has begun to monitor worship there is not yet a structure in place to gather views more widely, including from pupils and other governors. There have been no opportunities as yet to feed back to the governing body, although a report to the chair of governors contains action points for discussion.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Investment in good quality training for all who teach RE has both given the subject a higher profile and raised standards of teaching and learning. Through the diocesan Emmanuel Project, teachers are being supported to deepen their subject knowledge and develop new and engaging approaches. As a result, pupils are motivated by lessons which inspire and challenge. A range of assessment strategies enable pupils of all abilities to demonstrate their understanding. Evidence in pupils' own books and in class 'big books' shows that all groups are making good

progress. Best practice marking makes sure that pupils know how to improve but this is not consistent across all classes. Assessment of standards in relation to other subjects is not yet established, although a small pilot project is in progress with a view to whole school implementation. The lessons observed suggest that teaching is mainly good and that pupils are both interested and engaged. Pupils say that they enjoy learning about religions and then 'doing some deep thinking' about 'big, important questions'. There is evidence of a suitably balanced curriculum, devised with the advice and support of the diocesan advisor. It is delivered through well-planned lessons with appropriate progression and differentiation and clear links to values. The RE leader checks outcomes through book scrutiny but her monitoring role is not fully effective because she has no dedicated leadership time for lesson observation or individual teacher support. She has drawn up a realistic action plan for further improvement. There is support from local churches in delivering workshops exploring major Christian festivals, which adds a further dimension to the teaching of Christianity. At present, there is no formal monitoring by governors although they receive reports with interest.

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

Parents, staff and governors report that much has changed since Morland became a Church of England school, with steady progress from the time of conversion. However, more recently strong leadership from the headteacher has enabled the understanding of the core Christian values to be significantly enhanced and the efforts of all staff have embedded these values across the curriculum and beyond. Although leaders are united in supporting the strong, high profile values that enable pupils to thrive, they do not have a shared Christian vision on which to focus their strategic planning. Governors say, 'we do not own the current vision'. The governing body is beginning to see that it has a role to play in determining the Christian direction of the school and, following a training session provided by the diocese, has acknowledged the value of developing its own skills. Staff other than the headteacher and RE leader, the majority of whom joined the team before the school converted to VA status, have not yet begun to take advantage of opportunities to access training in developing Christian leadership. They have, however, been united in their commitment to the development of RE and the higher profile of Christian values across the curriculum. Work with local church schools provides new ideas and other sources of information around being a distinctively Christian community. Support from the deanery, the diocese and local churches has been instrumental in nurturing the school as it has discovered the richness of its Christian character. Church leaders are visible in school, enhancing both collective worship and RE; an interim priest is covering the interregnum and is committed to the school; the deanery has ensured that there is strong clergy presence on the governing body; the diocese is providing ongoing professional development for RE and guidance for the headteacher as she grows into her role. Governors understand the significance of good quality RE and collective worship as indicators of the importance put on faith and belief in a church school; they make sure that these are well resourced and meet statutory requirements but have not yet put in place a robust system of monitoring and evaluation. Communication with parents is good. Regular newsletters tell them about the core values. Parents say, 'behaviour has always been good but there is more respect now' and they say that their children are excited by school. Some Christian parents say that they feel supported by the strong values and many parents comment on the level of individual attention which 'allows everyone to shine'.

SIAMS report June 2017 Morland CEVA Primary Ipswich IP3 0LH