

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Holbeach St. Mark's Church of England Primary School	
St Mark's Road Holbeach St Mark's Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 8DZ	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Lincoln
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Name of federation	The Griffin Federation
Date of inspection	22 June 2017
Date of last inspection	10 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled I20549
Executive Headteacher	Karyn Wiles
Inspector's name and number	Fiona Griffiths 705

School context

Holbeach St. Mark's is the only church school within the Griffin Federation, sharing a governing body and an executive headteacher. A head of school is responsible for the day to day running of the school and was appointed to this role in April 2015. It is a smaller than average size primary school with 45 children on roll and 11 pre-school children. Children come from the surrounding area and are mainly of White British heritage. The number of children with special educational needs or disabilities is below the national figure. The school has close links with the local church and community.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mark's as a Church of England school are good

- Explicit Christian values have become more firmly established throughout the school community and impact on the quality of relationships and children's attitudes towards learning.
- Acts of worship are an important time in the school day where an inclusive sense of belonging creates a special time where children and staff come together in worship and prayer. They make a significant contribution to the children's everyday lives.
- The commitment of leaders and managers to the Christian ethos means that it is continually developing to have meaning and purpose for all members of the school community. They have ensured that it has made good progress since the previous inspection.

Areas to improve

- Develop innovative ways to increase the participation of the whole school community in acts of collective worship.
- Provide high quality opportunities for children to explore their growing spirituality in greater depth across all areas of the curriculum.
- Develop training opportunities to deliver the 'Understanding Christianity' resources and the new RE syllabus to staff in order that they can deepen pupils' understanding of Christianity.

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

St. Mark's is a nurturing and inclusive Christian family where the wellbeing of all is of great importance. This is because the school is rooted in the Christian faith with an encouragement for all to achieve. A positive learning environment creates good relationships where Christian values of forgiveness and compassion are in evidence and pupils are proud to belong. One child commented, 'everyone gets along because we are a church school'. Children are increasingly able to reflect on how the school values relate to their lives and the lives of other people, including those from different cultures and traditions. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a major focus and the school is moving towards ensuring that spirituality is central to the broad and balanced curriculum. Its provision is enhanced by the many educational visits throughout the school year; for example to Lincoln and Peterborough Cathedrals and to the Mosque, each widening learners' understanding of diversity. Dedicated cultural diversity days deepen learners understanding and respect for the lives and heritage of others. Pupils understand the need to be tolerant of others regardless of their faith background and a year 6 pupil commented 'you can respect others beliefs; you can all chose your own path'. All members of staff act as good role models and children of all ages demonstrate excellent behaviour towards each other and adults in school. This is due to the well embedded core values which impact strongly on day to day actions in and around the school. Children work well in teams and share their ideas with one another. They respond positively to being challenged. There is a strong emphasis on the development of the whole child within a safe environment. Children say that they enjoy school and readily identify work from across the curriculum of which they are proud. Attendance is in line with national averages and there have been no permanent exclusions. Parents spoke passionately of the way in which school staff responded to their child's needs and any issues were dealt with swiftly. Stained glass windows and displays in the school entrance reflect the Christian nature of the school, as do those along the school corridors and in classrooms. Reflection areas are in evidence and the staff are moving towards using these to develop pupils' thinking and raise questions at a deeper level. Families from a wide area actively choose the school for their children because of its strong Christian ethos and its good reputation for nurturing all learners and supporting their individual needs. RE makes a good contribution to the Christian character of the school. Together with collective worship it is enabling learners to have a growing understanding of the Christian story. Children explore questions in relation to the creation story and share their understanding of God. The school recognises that learners' understanding of Incarnation and Pentecost are not as secure and through the introduction of staff training on the 'Understanding Christianity' resources and the new RE Syllabus, opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge will increase.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and well supported in its delivery by staff, clergy and the Bishop's Visitor. Planning for adult led worship has a thorough structure which places values firmly at the centre of themes rooted in Bible stories. Children remember acts of worship because carefully delivered messages are easily accessible and consequently they relate to them because they have relevance to their own lives. Acts of worship are distinctively Christian and fully inclusive and at the same time interactive and fun. Children talk about the use of the interactive Bible where they carry out actions as the story unfolds. Since the previous inspection regular planning, delivery and evaluation of worship by the children has impacted positively on the school community with members of the collective worship council delivering their worship message to the pre-school children. Children gain a sense of occasion through carefully chosen music, lighting of candles and the use of Anglican liturgy. Children of all ages demonstrate high levels of participation confidently making contributions and increasingly making connections between Christian values and biblical teaching. During the inspection the school held their Holy Trinity Day where children showed a growing awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They were confident to voice their understanding and thoughts. Singing is enjoyed as an integral part of daily worship and does much to enrich the experiences of all those present. The Bible has a prominent place within worship and learners regularly use a variety of carefully selected Bibles within their classroom settings. This experience enables learners in Key Stage 2 to explore challenging questions and gain a deeper understanding of parables. Prayer is used well throughout the school day including lunch times and at the end of the school day. Children recite their own school prayer and know the Lord's Prayer, understanding the purpose of prayer as talking and listening to God. Children write prayers for their class prayer book and these are read during worship times. The school regularly uses the parish church as a place for worship and are considering ways to encourage families and the local community to participate in their fortnightly church worships in order to enhance the overall spirituality of the occasion. Parents regard the celebration of festivals such as Harvest, Easter and Christmas at the local church as part of the life of the school's spirituality at which there is standing room only.

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

The executive headteacher and head of school have ensured that the school has developed a more overt Christian character since the previous inspection. Members of the school community are aware that the school has a vision rooted in Christian teaching and that this has a positive impact on children's attitudes to learning and their approach to relationships. A move towards the teaching of explicit Christian values is developing a shared understanding of spirituality and governors and staff see this being lived out across the federation. A member of staff said, 'there is a spirit within the three schools so all are accepted in any one of the three'. The school has strong links with the Anglican church and its leaders and the Bishop's Visitor regularly deliver worship, making a valuable contribution to school life. Children and their families are welcomed to St. Mark's Church to celebrate services such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Senior leaders have a clear grasp of what needs to be done to continue developing the distinctive Christian ethos and have the full support of the governing body to do so. Self-evaluation is realistic and shows a good capacity to continue to improve as a church school. The school has benefited from clear advice from the diocese which has helped to evaluate their performance as a church school and given appropriate challenge. Members of staff show great passion for their duties and the focus on raising standards. The RE team, led by the head of school with members of teaching staff from across the federation, ensures that the subject has a high profile and is delivered in an exciting way. During the inspection a member of the RE team led a Godly Play session during which had pupils and staff focussed on the act and meaning of baptism through a carefully chosen script. This was a highly successful session. There is a growing understanding of developments in RE and the team are clear how to take the subject forward. Staff receive up to date training and are currently engaged in implementing the 'Understanding Christianity' project, exploring teaching Christianity at a greater depth. Since the previous inspection pupils have a greater influence on the way in which collective worship is delivered. Governors take seriously their role in appointing senior leaders who support the church school ethos. Governors monitor RE and worship to identify further areas for improvement and understand the need to develop their skills and abilities in continuing to challenge the school as a church school. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the overall impact of the Christian ethos on all aspects of school life are in place. Children, parents and staff all comment on the enjoyment and enthusiasm that is brought to worship. Parents say the school is successful in creating a sense of belonging in which everyone treats each other with tolerance and respect. They feel the school has struck the right balance between promoting its Christian distinctiveness and letting everyone 'live life to the full'. The school's Christian ethos has supported the school through some hard times. The school is at a place where children and adults are excited about the possibilities for their next stage of development.

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

SIAMS report June 2017 St. Mark's CE Primary School Holbeach St. Mark's Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 8DZ