

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Morley Church of England Primary School

Deopham Road, Morley, Norfolk NR18 9TS

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Diocese

Norwich

Previous SIAS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Norfolk

Date of inspection

30 November 2017

Date of last inspection

5 October 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Primary 121120

Headteacher

Laura Green

Inspector's name and number

Graham Lancaster 713

School context

This is a smaller than average primary school, with 138 pupils on roll. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. The proportions who speak English as an additional language and those for whom the school receives extra funding due to social or economic disadvantage are below the national average. The school is federated with Tacolneston VA Primary School. The headteacher oversees both schools and is new in post since the previous denominational inspection.

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

- The Christian ethos is evident in all aspects of the life of the school and is particularly demonstrated in its inclusivity and the care shown to those in particular need.
- Provision for every pupil is enhanced by highly valued relationships between all members of the community which are founded on Christian values.
- High quality religious education (RE) and collective worship are deeply important to the school and influence pupils strongly in their personal response to Christianity, in their spiritual development and, within RE, to the teachings of other world faiths.

Areas to improve

- Strengthen the cohesion between the school's mission statement, vision and values by making their biblical foundation more evident.
- Build on current strategies to monitor and evaluate collective worship, enabling pupils, staff, governors and parents to contribute to future developments.

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

The distinctively Christian ethos of Morley Primary School is recognised and appreciated by the whole community. The close partnership with the parish church and the local community contribute significantly to this being the case. Parents describe how the Christian ethos has flourished under the current leadership and recognise that this underpins the care provided for their children. The Christian character of the school is evident throughout the building through high quality displays of pupils' work in RE. However, although collective worship focusses on a Christian value each term, at times pupils do not readily link these or the school's mission statement to a biblical foundation. Values are modelled by adults and are particularly strong between older and younger pupils. This is fostered, for example, through members of the pupil ethos group supporting younger pupils in writing or drawing their reflections and prayers following collective worship. The school has an exemplary approach to inclusion, welcoming new pupils regardless of their prior experience or the challenges they may present. One teacher described this as 'unconditional love'. As an expression of Christian care pupils feel safe and happy in school. Consequently attendance is above the national average and there have been no exclusions. Pupil behaviour is of the highest standard and is inextricably linked to the school's Christian vision for every pupil to develop morally, spiritually and socially as well as academically. Prayer is very important to the life of the school. Attractive areas for reflection have been created both inside and outside which pupils visit regularly. Creative use has been made of the school grounds to encourage pupils' appreciation of and reflection on the wonder of God's creation. The overall spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is strong. Pupils undertake a range of responsibilities including the pupil council which has an active role in choosing which charities are supported and leading fund raising activities. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of charitable giving as an expression of their core Christian values of compassion and responsibility. Pupil achievement in 2017 was mixed with most areas broadly in line with national averages while others fell below. Evidence in pupil workbooks indicates that concerted action to secure consistently good pupil progress throughout the school is being successful. Innovative interventions, utilising information technology, are enabling vulnerable pupils to narrow the achievement gap with their peers. RE contributes well to the Christian character of the school, particularly by providing opportunities to explore the significance of biblical values in pupils' lives. The links which have been established with The Gambia and Malawi have enabled pupils to develop their perception of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. The breadth and depth of the RE curriculum provides them with a broad knowledge of beliefs from world faiths other than Christianity; however their understanding of difference and diversity within the United Kingdom is less well developed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Recent governor, staff and pupil surveys confirm the importance attached to collective worship by the school community. Parents relate instances when their children retell stories or ask them challenging questions related to recent worship. Detailed planning develops pupils' understanding of one of the 'Values for Life' over a term, exploring their biblical foundation and relevance for pupils' lives within school and beyond. In the weekly celebration session awards are given to pupils who have demonstrated a Christian value in action. Worship is distinctively Christian and often includes teaching from the Bible. The effectiveness of this was evident when pupils readily provided examples of courage as seen in the life of Saint Paul. Frequent references are made to the life and teaching of Jesus and to the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One parent related that when recently placing produce in a food bank his daughter had said 'this is just what Jesus would do'. Pupils engage enthusiastically in worship, for example through answering questions, creating and reading prayers and with joyful singing. Anglican traditions such as a shared welcome and the lighting of three candles to represent The Trinity are well established. In response to feedback, arrangements are now in place for all members of staff to attend. Non-teaching staff relate how this makes them feel more included as members of the staff team. Visits to the parish church serve to support pupil understanding of Christian festivals and their importance within the Church calendar. These are well attended and much appreciated by parents and contribute significantly

to the school's strong community feel. The vicar is actively involved in leading and supporting worship. As well as providing a strong link between the school and the church communities through worship he brings a depth of theological knowledge which enhances the planning process. Other local Christian leaders and all staff also lead worship. One pupil described how a recent visit from a local pastor from the RAISE charity 'helped me see how the Bible works'. The pupil ethos group actively contribute to the organisation and leadership of worship. Governors attend worship and there is some evidence of their monitoring and feedback. However, the process of evaluating the impact of worship is not sufficiently widely distributed to enable a range of people to contribute. The priority given to prayer within worship contributes effectively to pupil's understanding of both collective and personal prayer. This is supported by the attractive and stimulating areas created both inside the school and in the grounds. A natural and frequent response to worship is for several pupils to join members of the pupil ethos group in the reflection area within the hall, sitting quietly or writing their own prayers to add to a 'prayer tree'.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Senior leaders have ensured that RE is given a very high profile within the curriculum. They have provided the relatively inexperienced subject leader with both the encouragement and time to have a significant impact on the breadth and quality of provision across the school. The subject leader has infectious enthusiasm for RE as well as detailed subject knowledge. She has regular discussions with her colleagues, supporting them in their planning and sharing strategies to support pupils who are at risk of under achieving as well as approaches to challenge the more able. The impact of this can be seen in pupil workbooks and class journals which show that teaching and learning in RE is equally strong across all classes, with high expectations of all pupils. However, at present, marking does not always relate to the RE learning focus or prompt pupils to reflect on any impact that it may have on their own views. Teachers use a range of skills to ensure that the curriculum deepens pupils' thinking about religious and moral issues. This has been enhanced significantly through the addition of a resource called 'Understanding Christianity'. The training provided by the diocese has been disseminated in a manner which has excited and empowered teachers from Early Years to Year 6. This is already impacting positively on pupils' knowledge, understanding and engagement. Effective steps have been taken to ensure a balance has been maintained across the RE curriculum. Pupils are able to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of world faiths. This can be seen, for example, in the way that pupils describe Malala Yousafzai's campaign for equal rights for women and David facing Goliath as exemplifications of courage. In a recent staff survey one teacher said 'our children feel confident to discuss their beliefs and we can open doors to their experience of other religions'. Pupils confidently contribute their own ideas and are drawn into discussions which challenge their pre-conceptions and develop their understanding. Their respect for one another's views was evident as pupils debated which parts of the Bible provided a route map for life and which were a source of support in times of difficulty. Pupils' understanding of different Christian traditions and of other faiths is enhanced by visits to places of worship. Following a recent visit to Norwich Cathedral one described the impression made on her by the beautiful patterns as sun shone through the stained-glass windows. The visit by a representative of the Norwich synagogue significantly enhanced pupils' understanding of Judaism. Plans are currently being made to visit the nearest mosque. Assessment processes in RE are well established and reflect changes across the curriculum since the removal of levels. All indications are that standards are at least in line with other core subjects, both at the expected level and also the higher levels.

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

Leaders act as role models of the Christian ethos of the school. They apply Christian values consistently in policy and practice. The headteacher has ensured that the current focus on improving the consistency of pupil progress in English and mathematics has not detracted in any way from the distinctive Christian ethos of the school. The areas for development identified in the previous denominational inspection have been effectively addressed. Both RE and worship meet statutory requirements. Ideas and advice from the diocese

and other sources are actively sought and contribute to strategic planning to secure further improvements. Governors know their school well. They provide challenge as well as support for the leadership team. Members of their ethos sub-committee visit the school regularly, contributing to the monitoring of the Christian character of the school, RE and worship. Self-evaluation is comprehensive, although at present this does not consistently include sufficient objective evidence. The priorities identified do not always link directly with improvement plans. The benefits of sharing expertise across the federation are being increasingly utilised. This is particularly the case in their having common strategies to raise the achievement of vulnerable pupils and in the schools sharing one RE subject leader. The school is outward looking and generous, striving whenever the opportunity arises to help all individuals within and beyond the school, to fulfil their potential. This is evident in the release of one member of staff to support other schools in maths mastery. There is a clear commitment to the professional development of staff as future Church school leaders.

SIAMS report November 2017 Morley Voluntary Aided Primary School NR18 9TS