



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Forncett St Peter Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Aslacton Road  
Forncett St Peter  
Norwich  
NR16 1LT

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk

Date of inspection: 26 November 2014

Date of last inspection: 3 December 2009

School's unique reference number: 1261117

Headteacher: Judith Jones

Inspector's name and number: David Bunkell 815

#### **School context**

The school serves a large rural area, and currently has 104 pupils on roll. Much use is made by the school of the parish church, with the churchyard sharing a boundary with the school playground and field. The parish priest has been appointed since the previous SIAMS inspection and has become a foundation governor.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Forncett St Peter CEVA Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- Christian values are entirely embedded in all aspects of the daily life of the school, making it a community in which all care for one another.
- A highly-developed sense of spirituality is shared by all, with adults serving as excellent role models, giving pupils a solid grounding and experience in the Christian faith for their future lives.
- Pupils are challenged and excited by religious education (RE), making a profound contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, and helping to determine the Christian character of the school.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Provide further opportunities for pupils to learn about and experience people from cultures and religions other than their own, to give them greater knowledge of and respect for diverse communities.
- Develop assessment of work in RE, to enable objective evaluation, and to assist individual pupils to appreciate better their achievements and progress.

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

The school shows a profound commitment to living out the values of the Christian faith, which are deeply embedded into all areas of school life. By taking the view that everyone deserves as many chances as they need, and that everybody possesses talents and gifts of some kind, the Christian ethos plays a very significant part in the daily life and considerable academic success of all pupils. The maturity, spiritual awareness and self-esteem of the pupils is commented upon by senior high school staff when they move on to the next stage of their education. Pupils have the confidence to be independently minded, and to say exactly how they feel about any situation, in the knowledge that their opinions will be valued. The Christian character contributes in many ways to the SMSC development of all pupils, regardless of whether they are Christian, or of other or no faiths. The previous inspection had a recommendation to continue to look for opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual growth. It is clear that this has been achieved, through staff training about SMSC, by the revision of the curriculum, and by monitoring by staff and governors. The pupils clearly understand the core Christian values and make choices in accordance with them, for example when choosing which charities to support. These values are displayed in many ways around the school, including posted all over a large model elephant in the foyer, designed by a pupil. Each value is also represented by a small object kept in a rucksack, and pupils could take out an object and explain very clearly its significance and its personal significance to them. The embodiment of Christian values is undoubtedly a major factor in the excellent quality of relationships in the school and the impeccable behaviour of the pupils. Pupils appreciate that Christianity is a worldwide multicultural faith. They learn about other faiths and cultures. Some pupils have visited buildings used by other faiths, and people of other faiths have visited the school to speak to pupils, but both of these have been infrequent. Pupils greatly value the place of collective worship and religious education (RE) within their school. In conversation they explained this in terms of the commandment of Jesus to love our neighbours as ourselves.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Daily collective worship (CW) is seen by pupils and adults as essential, bringing all together to reinforce a sense of belonging and to explore more deeply one of the school's twelve core Christian values. In conversation later on the day of the inspection, pupils were able to reflect on that morning's CW on the theme of co-operation, explaining the significance of the calling of the disciples, and linking this to their own spiritual development, friendships, and the need for effective teamwork. They said that they value time to be quiet and still. Collective worship begins with a Christian greeting, and its Christian distinctiveness is reinforced by the use of candles and other religious artefacts. The principal festivals of the Church's year are observed, and coloured surrounds to the alcove containing the candles follow the Anglican liturgical colours throughout the year. The majority of pupils say the Lord's Prayer from memory, and sing religious songs confidently and enthusiastically. Pupils often write prayers to include in CW and to say before lunch. School council meetings start with a prayer, often extemporised to complement the agenda. Pupils are highly active in planning collective worship, and lead the Friday sessions in their entirety. This has addressed fully a focus for development from the previous inspection to increase pupils' involvement in planning and leading CW. The parish priest plays an important part in planning worship, and regularly leads sessions, aiding the Trinitarian and theological basis of worship. Pupils said that they enjoy listening to her. Other visitors, including a local Methodist minister and a Salvation Army officer, also sometimes lead CW. Having finished all the 'Open the Book' resources, work is now underway to provide a sequel to this scheme. The monitoring and evaluation of the impact of CW is highly effective. Foundation and other governors often attend, and write an evaluation. Older pupils sometimes write their thoughts about a particular session, and these are then placed in a 'collective worship evaluation' book, together with quotations from younger pupils. This feedback leads directly to significant improvement in the content and quality of worship, and meets entirely a previous focus for development to evaluate the impact of CW on pupils.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Pupils of all ages achieve high standards in RE. Level descriptors and formative assessment by teachers of pupils aged 7 and 11 help confirm this, with standards of achievement in RE mirroring those in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in vulnerable groups have similar achievements. Assessment takes place by grading each unit of work. The marking of pupils' work often becomes a dialogue, as they reply to teachers. In the longer term, they do not always know the precise extent of their progress. RE has been a major focus in the school's development plan and performance management objectives. Teaching is consistently of a high standard. The recommendation from the last inspection to evaluate the impact of RE on pupils has been met. The status of RE has been acknowledged by the recent award of silver for the RE Quality Mark. The youngest pupils knew that Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 examined a white flag, a lily and a dove, and could relate these all to peace. They listened very attentively to an account of the wartime Christmas truce. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 drew parallels between rites of passage in religions, including Christian confirmation and the Hindu sacred thread ceremony. Pupils often say that RE is one of their favourite subjects, and apply their knowledge and skills effectively in other areas, referring to relevant Bible stories, such as Noah and the good Samaritan helping others, and Jesus feeding the multitude with bread and fish. The study of RE has greatly contributed to the SMSC development of the pupils, in the way in which they care for each other, and appreciate such things as the secret garden and a prayer spaces project. Due to mixed-age classes, the curriculum follows a two-year rolling programme, with at least 80% of the time devoted to Christianity. RE is very well led and managed, and supported by a wide range of resources and artefacts.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**

The school's Christian vision and values are clearly articulated by leaders and displayed around the school and on its website. These underpin all that happens, and are greatly appreciated by the pupils, who explained how it enables them all to feel a real sense of belonging. Pupils who had previously attended another school invariably said how special and different this school is. This was echoed by a governor with considerable experience of other church schools. Self-evaluation by staff and governors is thorough and perceptive, with no complacency and constant striving to do even better. This ethos enables all pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. Relationships are very strong. Pupil behaviour is exemplary. Everybody in the school community plays a part in ensuring the well-being of all. Pupils are keen to serve as peer mediators, but say they are rarely needed, and then usually just to help resolve the most minor of squabbles. Planning for the future is thorough. A further teacher is being trained to take on the position of leadership of RE. Governors are aware of the need to ensure the future viability of the school, by considering formal partnerships with other schools and organisations. Links with the parish church are strong. School services take place there, and the building is used for art and other lessons. Pupils said that they think of the church as being part of the school. The parish magazine always has a lengthy article about the school, and foundation governors report on the school to all PCC meetings. Pupils take part in services in other local churches, for example playing handbells at a Methodist church. Much use is made of diocesan training and support. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their participation in a recent harvest service at the cathedral. Parents are highly supportive of all that the school does. They said that being a church school has had a great positive impact on family life, with the school's Christian values always evident, for example with regard to forgiveness. All those who responded to Ofsted Parent View would recommend the school. The leadership of RE and worship is given such a priority that the school goes well beyond the basic statutory requirements in these areas.