



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Sculthorpe Church of England Primary Academy

Creake Road
Sculthorpe
NR21 9NQ

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 14th June 2016

Date of last inspection: 7th July 2011

School's unique reference number: 141918

Headteacher: Christopher Allen

Inspector's name and number: Philip Knowles 795

School context

This is a smaller than average primary academy that has increased its pupil numbers by 50% since its previous SIAS inspection. A growing number of families now bring their children from out of catchment. Pupils are mainly from white British backgrounds. 12% currently attract the pupil premium grant and 28% of pupils are currently identified as having special needs, which is higher than the national average. Sculthorpe is part of a local federation of small schools known as the 'Unity Federation of Church Academies.' On 1st November 2015 Sculthorpe became a convertor academy within the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academy Trust (DNEAT.) Sculthorpe was graded 'good' by OFSTED at its February 2014 inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sculthorpe Church of England Primary Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- A clearly defined and well-embedded Christian ethos very effectively underpins and permeates the academy's work.
- Strong leadership and effective links with the local churches ensure that the Christian character permeates the life of the academy.
- Religious education (RE) lessons are exciting and use lively enquiry methods to enable pupils to discover, compare and respect world religions. These include regular visits to different places of worship, well-informed discussion and creative focus days.

Areas to improve

- Ensure regular pupil involvement in planning, leading and evaluating the academy's worship programme to further enhance the excellent provision already on offer
- Secure the robustness of the assessment of RE throughout the academy, including embedding the use of moderation to support accuracy of teacher assessments, thus ensuring the integrity of data held within the school's adopted data tracking system.

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

Sculthorpe Church of England Primary Academy offers an exciting, inspirational and fully inclusive learning environment. Although small it offers a rich curriculum as well as a wide range of learning experiences and opportunities for all of its pupils, who respond to and value the deeply embedded Christian values which lie at the heart of this family community. All members of the school's community recognise the importance of its Christian ethos to the work that it does and the way that members of the community are treated, cared for and encouraged to reach their personal potential. This is evidenced by the progress that is made by all groups of learners at this school in relation to their starting points. Parents say they particularly appreciate the values and morals that the school upholds, the relationships between all members of its community, its inclusive nature, and the sheer range of exciting learning experiences that the school offers their children. Pupils talk about their school as being 'something special.' They view Sculthorpe and the federation that it is part of as being 'one school but in three different buildings.' This notion is a very important factor in enabling ambitious projects to take place across the federation and for the children to develop positive relationships across the schools, which mean that these are well established before they move on to the next phase in their education.

RE is given high priority within the school. This is seen by the children as being a natural feature of the school's Christian character. RE permeates all areas of school life and impacts greatly on the children's understanding of diversity and their acceptance of those who are different from them. This is particularly important in a small rural primary school such as this. RE is openly and regularly discussed by pupils. It is seen by them as having a very important place in their curriculum and they understand that it is RE that helps them to begin to make sense of the world. This enriches their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development accordingly. As one child said: "Learning about other religions helps us respect other people's beliefs. What we believe doesn't matter, we are equal and all the same."

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is an important part of the school day and is valued by all. Christian values form the themes for worship and pupils are encouraged to reflect on how these values affect their lives. Pupils show that they are adept at making these connections by the way they discuss worship. For example, they indicate that they appreciate the importance of the Bible stories used in collective worship through comments such as: 'Each story teaches us a lesson about life.' A focus on the current value continues during the school day when teachers discuss it with their pupils during their lessons.

Worship is led by staff members or visitors such as the incumbent and the local Methodist minister, who led worship on the day of the inspection. Worship has a clear structure, which serves to encourage in pupils an awareness of the Anglican tradition which it mirrors. Pupils light candles and say a greeting to signal the start of worship. There is a clear time given over for reflection. Pupils sing enthusiastically and there is a real sense of respect, reverence and spirituality during worship that is clearly felt by everyone.

A well-established ethos committee made up of pupils regularly evaluates collective worship and its impact. Their recommendations are incorporated into subsequent improvements so that the value of this important role is recognised by all.

A range of prayers are used in collective worship and the use of prayer within the school day is well embedded. Even though there is little available space, an area is set aside for quiet reflection and prayer, incorporating a prayer tree, in the room that is used for collective worship. Pupils recognise this for what it is and they both value it and use it regularly. Pupils understand the value of prayer. One pupil described prayer as 'saying what you want to say to God' while another exclaimed 'We do a lot of praying here at our school.'

At Sculthorpe, pupils have a particularly well developed understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit due to clear teaching in collective worship and a recent focus upon Pentecost, which helped to reinforce the children's understanding of the Christian understanding of the Trinity

through exciting planned activities which resulted in exciting and colourful displays of children's work.

Whilst pupils do participate in leading worship at certain key times of the year and they are involved in leading elements of worship, including prayers and reading out Bible stories, they do not yet plan and lead the day-to-day collective worship regularly.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Pupils engage enthusiastically in their RE lessons and are very knowledgeable from a very young age because RE is well led; teaching is both varied and of consistently high quality and a wide variety of teaching approaches, including Godly play, creative approaches, 'I wonder,' enquiry and questioning are used. This ensures that lessons are both lively and engaging. Recently, pupils have visited a Mosque as part of their RE curriculum and they have benefited from visits from representatives of different faiths, which has helped to further enhance their understanding of religious diversity. The school also utilises its links with St Mary and All Saints church to good effect in RE lessons. In lessons, children show that they are capable of discussion that is deep and thoughtful while older children show that they are capable of engaging in higher level discussion around religious concepts. The RE leader is both knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The Diocese regularly use her knowledge and experience to support other schools. She provides strong subject leadership and has been working on a new 2-year rolling programme for RE which supports lesson planning across the school.

Meaningful links with collective worship are made via the Christian values that are studied in worship and are regularly followed through as part of discussion in RE. Recorded RE work highlights the varied approaches used and is of very good quality indeed. It further evidences the good progress pupils make in RE and their sound understanding of Christianity and of other world faiths. The subject leader has rightly identified the need to further refine the assessment of RE post assessment with levels and has a clear strategy for doing this. Regular and purposeful monitoring leads to the strategic development of RE and continually drives improvement.

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

All leaders value, articulate and promote a shared Christian vision of 'providing excellent and creative education in a Christian setting.' They communicate their distinctiveness as a church school extremely well, recognising and understanding the impact of the school's Christian values on learners and the whole school community.

The school has a close relationship with the Diocese, which works with the school to continuously improve the school's provision, both in relation to its Christian distinctiveness and in the teaching of RE. In turn, the Diocese recognises Sculthorpe's prodigious strengths and frequently utilises these to support other schools. Governors are proactive in their self evaluation as well as their monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctiveness. These have been shown to feed into ongoing developments and they are fully committed to developing this further, for example, through the establishing of a new 'British Values' committee and their recent work to map opportunities for SMSC throughout the school's curriculum.

The incumbent plays an important part. He has forged particularly strong links with the families of the school and the school's very effective and well established partnerships with both the Anglican and Methodist churches serve as a clear statement that the school, church, parents and wider community all work closely together to ensure that the school's Anglican foundation is both celebrated and preserved.

Governors recognise the skill of the headteacher in identifying opportunities for staff development, including leadership opportunities, among the staff across the federation to which Sculthorpe belongs; pupils feel a sense of ownership and involvement through the many contributions that they are making to enhance Sculthorpe as a church school, in particular, through their involvement with the school council and the ethos committee, both of which have been shown to have had a real impact in developing the work of the school.