



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Taverham VC Church of England Junior School

Taverham Road, Taverham
Norwich
NR8 6SX

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 26 January 2016

Date of last inspection: 28 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 121062

Headteacher: Paul Stanley

Inspector's name and number: Judith Ruff 528

School context

The school is larger than the average primary school with 448 pupils of junior school age at the time of the inspection. Pupils are predominantly from a White British heritage, with 17% receiving support for special educational needs, above the national average. The Ofsted inspection report of November 2014 judged the school to be good. The headteacher has been in post since September 2009. In September 2015 a new deputy headteacher was appointed with the responsibility for leading on church school distinctiveness. The church of St Edmund is a short walking distance from the school.

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

- The embedded Christian values impact very positively on pupils' sense of self-worth and confidence resulting in thoughtful and reflective individuals
- High levels of care and nurture enable pupils to feel valued and special and lead to them exhibiting a strong generosity of spirit towards the achievements of others
- The strong partnership with the local church community, in particular the leadership of the vicar, has led to enhanced understanding within school of the Christian way of life and worship

Areas to improve

- Increase pupils' knowledge, understanding and first-hand experiences of the diversity to be found within Christian denominations
- Deepen pupils' understanding and appreciation of worship by increasing opportunities to write prayers and to plan and lead worship
- Ensure that the good model and structure of whole school worship is consistently used

within class and year group worship

- Develop and strengthen parental understanding of the church school distinctiveness by gathering their views and including them on appropriate working parties and in discussions

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

In this school, the 'Values for Life' and the 'Values for Learning' mesh together very effectively, providing a framework for pupils to develop both academically and pastorally in a highly supportive and caring Christian ethos. Rising levels of attainment and pupils' pride in their work is very apparent as they understand the need to persevere, being inspired by examples from the present day and by Bible characters such as 'The Good Shepherd' seeking his lost sheep. The school's reputation for meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils is high within the local area. The recent provision of a 'Nurture Group' at the school has further strengthened the school's ability to respond carefully and thoughtfully to a wide range of needs. Attendance levels are good, with just two fixed term exclusions over the past years. Pupils are secure in their knowledge that the school values them as unique individuals, made in the image of God. As an outcome of receiving this inclusive and welcoming approach, pupils are able, through charitable acts of giving, to respond to a range of needs with love and concern, including donations to the local food bank and a cancer charity. A beautiful 'Peace Garden' has been created for pupils to reflect and ponder why peace is so important and what it means in their lives. Pupils are very appreciative of opportunities for quiet reflection. 'It helps to relax me. It teaches me not to hurry, but to think about the things that are important in my life.' Pupils are given very good levels of responsibility through the School Council, House Captains and Sports Leaders. They wear these badges with pride and the linking of achievements both to values for life and learning gives pupils a very clear steer as to how they can begin to shape their behaviours to become successful learners and community members. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, eager to share their learning and proud of their school. They display a clear generosity of spirit when it comes to celebrating the achievements of others. Although through the dedicated involvement of the local vicar, pupils are able to understand something of Anglican worship, they have little experience of other Christian denominations. Awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith comes through RE units of work and visitors to school, such as a group of visiting Maasai warriors. Pupils' awareness of the impact of the Christian faith and belief and their understanding of the key concepts around the sacraments, such as baptism, are developed through RE. The use of the church for RE focused activities, together with opportunities to engage with members of the local church community, gives Christianity relevance in the local context.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of the school day. Staff who are new to the school appreciate the focus provided through worship to reflect and think more deeply about how the chosen values impact both on their own and pupils' lives and experiences. Pupils appreciate collective worship as an 'opportunity to learn what life is all about'. They are able through regular opportunities to discuss worship themes to explain that not only does it teach them about the practical applications of each value, but that having a time to be calm and still refreshes their mind and nourishes their opportunity to develop a deeper spiritual awareness. Worship is experienced in a variety of forms, from whole school worship through to year group and class worship. School leaders have worked hard, with the support and guidance of the vicar to produce a framework for worship, which has a clear structure and is engaging and meaningful to pupils. Opportunities for spiritual development are clearly identified through periods of prayer and reflection. Pupils participate in worship through beautiful singing, boosted by a large school choir and the use of ensembles taken from the school orchestra to also enhance worship. The church is used for year group worship on a regular basis, being too small to accommodate the whole school and parents. The highlight of the year is the school's

carol service held in Norwich Cathedral, where all the school community, with the choir and orchestra can worship together with families and friends. The two acts of worship observed on the inspection day engaged the children on the theme of 'perseverance' with the telling of appropriate stories and real life inspirational figures, such as the recent attempts to cross the Antarctic single-handedly. However, the consistency of the structure of worship as implemented in the whole school worship is not so apparent in these year group gatherings, where setting the atmosphere for worship is underdeveloped. Pupils interviewed are keen to have greater opportunities to write prayers as part of worship. In-school discussions between the deputy headteacher and pupils has identified pupils' wish to develop their skills in both planning and leading worship to a greater degree. Governor monitoring of worship has led to useful discussions about how to involve parents more regularly in collective worship in school and how pupils can be more involved with the setting up of the hall for worship, linking this responsibility to the achievement awards. Both of these points are now being thought through by senior leaders. Pupils have a developing understanding of the Trinity, but this is at an early stage. At present there are no visitors from other Christian denominations leading worship.

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

Since the previous inspection, both governors and school leaders have thought carefully and earnestly about ways in which to raise the school's Christian identity, to be rooted in bible values and the teachings of Jesus, whilst retaining the inclusiveness and welcome to those of all faiths or none. The mission statement 'Learning for a fuller life' adapted from St. John's Gospel was chosen because governors and senior leaders wanted to emphasise the centrality of the Gospel values to the ways in which all members of the community are valued and provide the core from which relationships are built and developed. Collective worship, through the leadership of the headteacher, further provides good opportunities for all members of the school community to reflect on how these core Christian values work out through the day to day life of the school. Staff members, whether they have a personal Christian faith or not, are able to confidently model and explain the importance of each focused value to becoming individuals that understand the implications of Jesus' teachings for the way in which lives are led. The importance of these core Christian values are further developed and exemplified through RE, which is very well led and includes a focus on examples of the life and works of key Christian figures, such as the local saint, St Walstan. Pupils' behaviour and opportunities for leadership, enable them to demonstrate daily acts of compassion, forgiveness and friendship. These are embedded through the leadership of staff who encourage and support restorative approaches to disagreements and reflection on the impact of words and actions. Self- evaluation systems are accurate with evidence gathered from governor and senior leaders' monitoring of both RE and collective worship. These activities have strengthened senior leaders' ability to identify areas for further development, such as increased opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship. The recently formed 'Christian Distinctiveness Working Party', which includes the deputy headteacher, chair of governors, vicar and a foundation governor, has already galvanised and increased the levels of attention on areas to improve Christian distinctiveness further across the school. For example, the value for each half term is now shared via the school website and newsletters. At present, parents' understanding of church school distinctiveness is not strong and their views on this have not been formally sought. Governors have an excellent capacity to support senior leaders in SIAMS related areas of improvement, through their professional experiences and levels of expertise. Governors' meetings have a standing item on church school distinctiveness and all governors are encouraged to join in these discussions. Links with the diocese are strong and productive, such as training and networking events that have boosted the knowledge and understanding of both senior leaders and those new to the profession on matters such as RE teaching and church school distinctiveness.

