

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Drayton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

School Lane, Drayton, Norwich, Norfolk NR8 6EF	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Norwich
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Norfolk
Date of inspection	20 November 2017
Date of last inspection	5 December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	131287
Headteacher	David Oldham
Inspector's name and number	Stephen Green 809

School context

This is a large school for Norfolk, situated four miles outside Norwich city. Pupils attend from years 3 to 6 and are taught in three mixed-ability classes within each year group. Most teaching is with their class teacher, although there is some specialist teaching. The headteacher joined the school in September 2016. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds and broadly reflect the national average for special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), those speaking English as a second language and pupil premium funding. OFSTED took the school out of special measures in 2013, when they judged it as good.

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

- The school has a strong tradition of caring which is at the core of its vision statement and school ethos. This is recognised by all members of the school community and highly valued.
- Pupil behaviour is of a very high standard, and reflects the school's Christian values and the way it implements its vision statement.
- Recently introduced co-operative learning strategies encourage pupils to work together and support each other in learning and wider school life. These are enlarging upon the significant improvements in academic attainment which have been noted by OFSTED and the local authority since the school came out of special measures in 2013.

Areas to improve

- To improve parents' understanding of the school's distinctively Christian values by carrying out a review of these values and the way they contribute to the school's vision statement, and the way they are presented to parents and others on its website and in its prospectus.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to plan and lead some collective worship (CW), in order to give them a greater ownership of worship.
- To provide more opportunities for parents to join collective worship, and to provide feedback to school leaders which can be used to inform their monitoring, evaluation and plans for further school improvement.

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

The school has a vision statement built around the word 'care'. This was specifically chosen to emphasise the school's strong traditions of caring built upon Christian values. The letters stand for cherishing each individual, aiming for excellence, relationships built upon mutual respect and experiences that enrich lives. A display in the school foyer draws links between distinctively Christian values and the four sections of the vision statement. As an example, 'cherishing' is linked to Jesus' instructions to love one another and to do to others as you would have them do to you. Appropriate Bible references are provided. The school enlarges upon these Christian values in CW and the wider curriculum. As a result, the school has an ethos of caring and strong, supportive relationships which pupils can attribute to Christian values. However, although the vision statement is prominent on the website and in every classroom around the school, the distinctively Christian values behind it are not. Although parents are very aware of the vision statement they are much less aware of the distinctive Christian values behind it. The school recognises the need to review these distinctively Christian values, the way they link into its vision statement and the way they are publicised to parents. One way they have begun to do this is by sending home activity sheets with recent newsletters suggesting how parents might wish to reinforce and develop the work on forgiveness, the school's current value focus, at home with their children.

The school's Christian character and caring ethos have resulted in behaviour which is of a very high standard. Recently introduced co-operative learning strategies encourage pupils to support each other as they learn together in mainly mixed-ability groups. This has generated a pleasant and harmonious atmosphere around the school which is particularly obvious when pupils are playing together and moving around the school between lessons. Pupils and their parents recognise the importance of both religious education (RE) and CW in school life and their wider lives, and are able to explain how the vision statement is at the core of this. Parents and governors recognise the strong contribution the school's Christian ethos makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). Many parents spoke of their strong support for the school's caring atmosphere, with one saying that her child has flourished since joining the school. She states that 'We feel... that she is receiving the very best education academically and pastorally,' and that 'the Christian ethos of the school has had a clear impact on her as a pupil.' Another said that 'my son loves coming to school'.

Pupils have some understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith and they have respect for those of different faiths and those with none. They visit the local Anglican church both for worship three times a year (to mark Christmas and Easter and for a school leavers' service in the summer) and so that pupils can learn about Christian traditions there. The rector also leads worship every month. However, these opportunities are neither frequent nor well developed enough to support and improve pupils' understanding of Christian traditions and beliefs. The introduction of the Understanding Christianity materials has begun to improve pupils' understanding of core Christian concepts. However, their understanding of faith and belief within and beyond Christianity is underdeveloped. Church leaders run a well-supported weekly lunch-time club with a focus upon Bible study. This undoubtedly makes a positive contribution to developing pupils' knowledge of the Bible as well as their relationship with the local church.

Pupils demonstrate practical understanding of care, compassion and responsibility for others through their support of a number of charities during the year including Children in Need and the Norwich Foodbank. The school choir leads a Christmas carol service and pupils enjoy a very wide variety of extra-curricular activities to provide breadth to their learning.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Collective worship has a strong biblical focus and is used to develop and reinforce the school's Core vision statement, its ethos of caring and its Christian values. Examples are found in the Bible to enlarge upon the school's values, to reinforce appropriate behaviour and to develop positive attitudes towards other members of the school community. As a result of the school's programme of worship, pupils have very good attitudes towards each other and other members of the school community. They show polite respect and are very willing to listen to the views of others and respect them. Their attitude during worship is good, and they enjoy taking roles to support whoever is leading. They help set up the hall for worship, run any audio-visual support that is needed, choose appropriate music that will be used and enjoy taking roles to act or read during the service. However, the development point from the last inspection asking the school to provide opportunities for pupils to experience planning and leading CW themselves has not been acted upon. They have no regular, formal role in providing feedback after worship, although there are annual pupil perception surveys on a wide variety of themes which have included the school ethos, RE and worship. Most worship is led by the headteacher or his deputy, although the rector takes a monthly act of worship. Pupils enjoy these opportunities and appear to listen carefully and take on board the messages being given to them. Teaching staff all attend Friday celebration assemblies, which include a review of the week's work and collective worship. They also attend in pairs during the week to support the worship leader. Church leaders have been trained to run Open the Book assemblies and the school has scheduled these to begin early next term. The

school hopes this will improve pupils' understanding of the Bible and provide another link with the local church. Pupils enjoy their opportunities to worship in the local Anglican church.

Parents are generally pleased with the content of CW and maintain that it has a positive impact upon their children. One spoke particularly positively about the effect a recent focus on forgiveness had upon her daughter when they discussed it later at home. Opportunities for parents to join CW are few, which the school ascribes to a lack of space as there are over three hundred pupils in the school, but they are looking at ways to improve this. Although parents are given an annual survey to express their views, and all those spoken to described senior leaders as very approachable and willing to listen, there is no formal programme to provide parents with regular opportunities to share worship and then gather feedback from them. Consequently, although school leaders carry out effective and in-depth self-evaluation, it does not represent all groups in the school community.

The pupils spoken to in the inspection had no understanding of the Holy Trinity and a very limited understanding of the structure of normal Anglican worship.

All pupils have had the opportunity to write prayers, and many are displayed in classrooms and used for the saying of grace which all pupils do before meals. There is a prayer tree in the foyer and a reflection corner. However, there was little evidence that either is yet being used by the school as an important part of pupils' developing spirituality.

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

In the years since Drayton was placed in special measures by OFSTED (2012), school leaders have worked hard to improve academic standards whilst retaining the emphasis on caring that they believe to be their key strength. The improvement in teaching and learning that resulted in them being rated good in both their SIAS inspection (December 2012) and then OFSTED (2013) has been sustained. The local authority now rates the school in its highest (green) category and this has been echoed by the school's challenge partner. Academic results are now consistently above the national norm. School leaders have maintained the core vision of caring, and have used distinctive Christian values to reinforce and justify it. Leaders all articulate and share the school's vision and can describe the impact of their Christian values upon it. They have a good understanding of the school's performance and carry out regular and accurate self-evaluation. Although the present headteacher only joined the school in September 2016, he has consolidated the school's work on its caring ethos and introduced a philosophy of co-operative learning across the curriculum. This is enlarging upon the ethos of caring, providing a structure for pupils to support each other in mixed-ability groups throughout the curriculum and in their play and sport.

Parents very strongly support the school and there is a rising roll. They see all staff as very approachable, from classroom teachers providing an email address to make it easier for them to communicate concerns quickly, to the headteacher 'welcoming contacts on the playground'. One parent maintained that 'all concerns are listened to and actioned', while another said 'I have three children at the school and no reservations about recommending it to other parents. I will sing its praises to anyone who will listen'. Parents spoke about the positive impact the school's vision statement has upon their pupils in the wider world beyond school, a sentiment the school values and works hard to achieve. Parents contribute to the school in a variety of ways, including reading, running the library and fund-raising for the school's own swimming pool. The school strongly values this relationship. Parents do not yet have regular opportunities to join collective worship and to provide feedback for school leaders. As a result, school leaders' self-evaluation does not routinely include their views.

The local church has a mutually beneficial relationship with the school. It provides staffing for the weekly Bible study club and provides very active members for the governing body. The school publicises church events by sending notes home in book bags and by providing a church notice board in the school entrance. Some pupils, but not all, have the opportunity to visit the cathedral for diocesan education days. The school would like this opportunity to be extended by the diocese to include all pupils at some time during their time at the school, as it allows pupils a greater insight into the working of the church at diocesan level. Many members of the teaching staff and governing body have been on diocesan training courses leading, for example, to more confident teaching of Christianity and a more robust monitoring of Christian distinctiveness.

School leaders ensure that the school's Christian vision has a wide effect across the curriculum and upon pupils' SMSC. This is regularly monitored by co-ordinators, the senior leadership team and by governors. Parents are keen to ascribe pupils' excellent behaviour to the ethos of caring and the Christian values that the school encourages. The importance given to the roles of RE and CW within the curriculum can be seen by the headteacher leading CW and by the budgetary and training support given to the RE co-ordinator to enable her to do her job to a very high standard. The introduction of Understanding Christianity and its training implications, both for the co-ordinator and more widely for classroom teachers, are examples of this.