

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Great Wilbraham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street, Great Wilbraham, Cambridge, CBI 5QJ

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Ely</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
Date of last inspection	10 <sup>th</sup> July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 110789
Headteacher	Richard Brown
Inspector's name and number	Christopher J Allen 847

#### School context

Great Wilbraham Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school serving the parishes of Great and Little Wilbraham; both churches are used regularly for services by the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is slightly higher than the national average and pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is lower than the national average. The school was inspected by OFSTED in March 2017 and retained its existing rating of 'good'. Since the last SIAS inspection the school has had four head teachers, the current one has been in post 2 years. There have been significant changes in teaching staff during 2015-16 and 2017. The school has recently developed a nursery to extend the provision it can offer.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Wilbraham as a Church of England school are outstanding

- A deeply embedded distinctively Christian vision supported by core values and vibrant ethos prepares pupils to be inquisitive and active learners as children of God.
- Collective worship has become central to the life of this church school; it enriches the Christian character of the school and supports pupils to live their life as Christians based on the teachings of Jesus.
- Parents, staff and wider community contribute fully to the life of the school as a church school and make it the beating heart of the local community.
- Senior leaders and governors consistently articulate, live out and promote the Christian values of the school and hold their decision making processes to account by continually referring back to their core values of care, creativity and confidence.

#### Areas to improve

- Build on the secure work on diversity in the school to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- Enhance the planned monitoring and evaluating of collective worship to include other stakeholders than governors, particularly pupils in the school who have a keen interest in how worship could develop.
- Take the opportunity the school now faces in terms of its stability and success to consider strategically the next stage of its life as a flourishing Church of England school.

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

Distinctively Christian values are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school. All members of the school community articulate the vision of the school - TOGETHERNESS - with passion and real meaning. This vision is underpinned by three core values, care, creativity and confidence linked directly to biblical verses and explored regularly in religious education (RE) and collective worship. As a result, pupils talk of the importance of friendship, of all being included and how they trust in God without need to question. Parents fully support the Christian character of the school and how this impacts on the daily lives of their children. One parent said, 'I love the fact all pupils care for one another, know each other and the staff do too – it makes our school a very special place in God's world.' The sense of the school being at the heart of a Christian community spills out in the displays and sculpture around the school; one great example is a new cross in the entrance hall. This is made up of individual slips of paper glued to wood and reflects the both the individuality of each pupil and their coming together as a community to form one cross to reflect their faith in God.

The school's Christian character has a high profile and shapes the way in which it supports every pupil and family and helps pupils prepare for life. The impact of the school's Christian character was summarised by one senior leader 'our Christian values are embedded and as a result our children are resilient learners, they rise to the challenges presented to them, draw on our caring ethos and as a result feel prepared and ready to face life'. This is also seen in how pupils enjoy coming to school; current attendance is higher than previous years' and above the national average. Standards in the early years are above national average and in line with national average for the end of key stage 2. Small cohorts in the school impact on data, where this is evident the school provides convincing reasons to evidence why and recognises pupils as individuals with their own stories to tell. Overall standards across the school are in line with national expectations and provide convincing evidence of the school knowing every pupil well and the best ways to meet individual needs.

Behaviour of learners is of the highest standard and this is consistently attributed to the schools Christian character and values by all members of the community. Each week a core value is introduced as a personal quality for pupils to display in their relationships. Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to reflect on and interpret these values. This includes exploring Christianity in RE and through the use of such materials as the Understanding Christianity Project, which allows them to explore their own faith in comparison to others. One pupil said, 'in RE we get to act out stories from the Bible like the faith of the centurion and then we discuss what we can learn from it, like we are all servants of God and we should trust in what he says'. However, whilst they understand diversity as celebrating difference, pupils are not yet fully familiar with Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Pupils speak enthusiastically about spiritual, moral and social development - including visits to Ely Cathedral and the local church of St Nicholas, they work with groups within the local community and select local charities to support each year. As a result a highly developed interpretation of spirituality is shared across the school community. One pupil said 'we are introduced to calmness here, we are allowed to let the Holy Spirit be in us and this allows us to be with God'.

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

Careful planning and strategic development by the relatively new head teacher have ensured that collective worship has become a central part of school life. Great value is placed on it and this is articulated clearly by all members of the school community. One pupil said, 'I really like collective worship as we talk not only about the stories in the Bible but how they contribute to making us a better person in life'. Worship is both inspirational and inclusive. It has a healthy mix of biblical content, current world events, singing and celebration. In doing so it raises aspirations of the pupils in the school. One example is the weekly celebration worship; individual pupil achievements, group achievements and class achievements are recognised. Each is linked to Christian values and is underpinned by the belief that everyone serves one another. When biblical references are made they are linked back to the school's three core values. One pupil described these as the school's own Holy Trinity as each value is intrinsically linked to one another and helps them to be the best person they can be. Parents really appreciate the impact this has on their children; they enjoy attending worship in school as well as church, one parent said 'the values each child is taught in school are the same as we teach at home and as a result they underpin the faith we have as Christians and how we all want to live our lives'. This is lived out through the pupil's enthusiasm in using their Action Bibles presented at a recent church service, seeing them as a 'directory to life' that provides guidance and advice to them. The school works closely with the parish churches in Great and Little Wilbraham; a range of traditional festivals are celebrated such as harvest, Christmas and Easter. Other services are undertaken with the local community to develop a closer relationship; pupils and members of the local church spoke of the recent Pentecost and Ash Wednesday services where pupils took an active role in worship within the community. The local church has also helped shape worship in school which now uses the greeting, Grace and Lord's Prayer from the services in church. Collective worship is planned carefully and led by staff, local clergy and groups such as GENER8. Recent

professional development led by the diocese on collective worship has had a positive impact on staff confidence in delivering it through developing their knowledge of the theology of Christian worship. Pupils as a result have an impressive understanding of many Christian themes and understand God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The local incumbent recognised that the pupils made sense of this through the fact that each pupil is a gift of God's love, that they have been born from that love, they live in that love and that love will always sustain them. In providing this clarity and helping to shape collective worship the school has clearly addressed the development point from the last inspection. Pupils do not yet take part in regular monitoring of collective worship. They recognise that they can pass on their views through the school parliament but do not currently take an active role alongside other stakeholders such as foundation governors in this process. Foundation governors regularly monitor worship in the school, as well as contributing and helping to shape it; insightful recording and feedback has made this a strength of the school and again addresses a development point from the previous inspection.

Prayer is seen as important in the daily life of the school. Since the last inspection each classroom has developed a dedicated prayer space where pupils have a selection of prayers they can use including ones that they have written themselves. They understand the value of prayer, one pupil said 'We don't just pray to God to say thank you we also pray to say sorry for our sins or to ask for help'. This was clear in the daily act of collective worship where pupils read their prayers, reflecting the different reasons for prayer as well as linking them to current world events such as tragedies in the news. Prayer and reflection continue outdoors with a prayer and reflection garden constructed in a quiet corner of the playground. Pupils spoke openly of using this space to come and think, to sit and be calm and to pray quietly. They said that there is usually an adult there at playtimes to help them and pray with them if needed. Pupils take great comfort in these spaces, using them freely and regularly in their daily routine.

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

Leaders consistently and confidently speak of, live out and promote the Christian vision of the school. This has fundamentally developed since the appointment of the current head teacher, who has devoted time, effort and resources to ensure everyone in the school and local community understands the vision of the school. In doing so – TOGETHERNESS summarises the recognition that everyone has a role to play, in encouraging and enabling every pupil to become caring, creative and confident. This is supported by the individual attention leaders readily share on every pupil in the school. Parents particularly recognise this; one said, 'The adults truly care for all of the children, they include the wider community of the villages, they maintain and develop lasting links with everyone and as a result the school is extremely well supported and regarded'. Parents talk of staff always being visible in the school, good role models of the values of the school and there to listen and help. It is also clearly recognised that the present head teacher has brought stability, consistency and confidence to the school in the two years since his appointment after a period of great challenge and change.

Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness based on effective self-evaluation to which all stakeholders make a contribution. The curriculum has been shaped over the last two years to be creative, engaging and challenging for every pupil. The recent addition of a nursery on site has further enhanced the early years' provision the school can offer. The school celebrates local, national and global events and recognises the importance of doing so as a rural isolated school; one good example of this is the work undertaken on diversity based around the Church of England report Valuing All God's Children. Through the Cambridge Race and Equality Service pupils explored diversity and they took part in National Pride week in February 2017, hosting the Pride flag and recognising their individual differences through a wide range of work and activities.

The school and church value their relationship with one another and how each take a lead in the work they do. The local incumbent said 'St Nicholas's cherishes its connection with the school and celebrates the heritage of the school and church being central to the local communities'. The work of the parish assistant in the school has been transformational for many pupils through the work of the Happy/Sad Club that supports pupils and families in times of need. The school gives leadership of RE and collective worship high priority and leaders feel supported in their role, governors regularly meet with them to evaluate their work, verify their judgements and consider the next stages of development for the school. A wide range of professional development for all teaching staff and particularly the RE Co-ordinator has led to effective strategic planning, monitoring and evaluating by leaders in the school and ensured it has sufficiently tackled development points from the last inspection. The diocese supports the school and has provided training on collective worship this year for all teaching staff; this has developed the staff's understanding of Christian worship and has allowed them to confidently deliver worship. The diocese has also supported the head teacher in developing the school's Christian vision and values as a result it is in a much more stable and successful place to really consider the direction it may take in its next stage of life to enable it to be in the best position to flourish and thrive as a Church of England school in the future.

The arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.