



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Hilgay Village VC Primary School

School Road
Hilgay
Downham Market
Norfolk PE38 0JL

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 10th June 2015

Date of last inspection: June 2010

School's unique reference number: 121072

Headteacher: Judith Jarrett

Inspector's name and number: Pat George. Quality assurance Rosemary Privet 321

School context

Hilgay is a voluntary controlled, smaller than average primary school with 60 pupils, taught in 3 mixed age classes. All pupils are from White British backgrounds with 11% pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is 26%. Worship takes place in a separate building used as a hall.

The headteacher has been in post for eighteen months and the school is federated with a nearby community school. There is no religious education (RE) collective worship (CW) lead currently due to staffing changes and the headteacher is covering both roles. The local benefice and school, are currently looked after by the rector of nearby Downham Market.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hilgay Village as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The good quality relationships in the school, based on Christian values, are having a positive impact on the developing distinctive Christian character of the school.
- The commitment and drive of the headteacher to developing the distinctiveness of Hilgay as a church school is a strength.
- The federation and partnership working has a positive impact on school improvement.

Areas to improve

- To include all members of the school community in developing a specific set of core Christian values, to highlight their importance and extend the positive impact these values have.
- To deepen learners understanding of worship and extend their opportunities for spiritual development by enabling them to actively participate in planning, leading and evaluation.
- To develop the impact of leadership, including of the Governing body, by implementing a

system for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctive Christian character.

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

As a result of the school's implicit caring Christian ethos, pupils behave well and speak of taking care of others. Relationships between them and adults are positive and based on Christian values. Parents speak very highly of the school praising the family and inclusive ethos, which 'gives them a focus and helps moral and social development'. Achievement is improving due to the impact of the developing values on pupil wellbeing and behaviours for learning. Attainment is variable due to very small cohorts. Attendance has improved by 2% in the last year and is now above average. There have been no exclusions. This illustrates the impact of the school's nurturing Christian ethos on pupil wellbeing. Pupils clearly enjoy being at school and speak positively about the experiences they have, for example a recent pilgrimage to Walsingham. Opportunities to contribute to school life are developing through, for example, the school council. The Christian values evident in the daily life of the school, are not yet clearly identified as a core set of values. This means that the school is not able to focus tightly enough on a few chosen values. Therefore pupils and other members of the community find it hard to understand their Christian roots. As a result, pupils find it hard to articulate the links between the values and the life and teachings of Jesus. They are, however, beginning to make links between bible teachings and their daily lives. Some pupils can explain that they are a church school. They talk about their school being a 'holy' school. Understanding of spirituality is beginning to be taught across the curriculum. Pupils' ability to respond to these experiences is at an early stage of development. A clear definition of spirituality is not understood by all members of the school community. Although it is evident in the daily of the school, monitoring of its impact is underdeveloped at present. Learners, especially at Key Stage 2, talk positively about religious education (RE) and can link their learning in Christianity to bible teachings and worship. In this way it is making some contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character. Opportunities for reflection are currently limited. There are reflection areas in classrooms which provide a quiet space for pupils to read and think. Pupils' understanding of their purpose is in early stages of development. This means that they are not yet having a consistent impact on learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Improvement from the last inspection is evident in the school's recent policy for SMSC which sets out a foundation for future development. Awareness of Christianity as a worldwide multi cultural faith is developing, for example through links with a school in Gambia and RE units of work for example, a unit on marriage.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Leaders can clearly describe the impact of collective worship and values, reflecting the importance of worship in the life of the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about worship. Staff are positive in their support of and participation in worship. Collective worship is currently planned for the year using Ely Diocese plans which are adapted. The planning follows themes and is developing the use of values based resources such as Values for Life. This is evidence of progress since the last inspection. Parents say that, as a result of changes to worship and improved links with the church, their children are now confident to talk about bible stories and the life of the church. Whole school worship takes place daily in the hall, which has recently been developed as a specific area, with visual stimuli and a focus table. These improvements are evidence of the thought and effort that has gone into expanding the experience of worship for pupils. The visual environment is still being developed. Symbolic objects such as candles are not always used effectively to clearly mark the beginning and end of worship. Worship is led by the headteacher, another staff member, the incumbent and visitors. There is intermittent use of a recognised structure in whole school worship. As a result pupils' awareness of the key elements of Anglican worship is inconsistent across the school. They say, however, that they enjoy singing and know that there will be a prayer. Careful planning includes teaching about the person

of Jesus Christ and learners show an understanding of the importance of his place in worship. As a result of this, some learners can link the biblical teachings to their community. The link between the school core values and worship is underdeveloped at present. There is a plan in place to include them but it is not extended sufficiently well into the ongoing life of the school. Pupils do sometimes contribute through drama, music and occasionally their prayers. However, they have limited opportunities for participation, through discussions during worship, and by leading. They speak positively of the prayer boxes in their classrooms where they write thank you prayers. Opportunities for pupils to engage with other types of prayer such as praying on behalf of others are less well developed. This limits their understanding of the value of prayer to their everyday lives. They enjoy their visits to church and express this as an opportunity to include their parents. These visits enable them to develop some understanding of Christian festivals. The supporting rector is very supportive of the school and its development. He regularly leads worship in school and is positive about pupil visits to church and the impact on the whole community. Pupils are excited about the potential use of their outside quiet place for spiritual development. The impact of worship on the spirituality of pupils is developing. Pupils' understanding of the Trinity is in an early stage of development illustrated by an older pupil's comment 'God is the creator and Jesus tells his word'. Planning, feedback and monitoring of worship currently lies with staff and pupil views are not yet included. This generates small changes, for example, further input by the whole school community. Review of the impact of worship is still being developed with pupils, governors and parents. Feedback about worship and monitoring of routines and responses are not currently used in school improvement planning

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

The headteacher has a clearly articulated vision for the school as a distinctive Church school based on Christian values. As this vision is in the early stages of development it is not yet sufficiently understood by all members of the school community. The federation with a non church school is developing. The impact and influence of this school as a church school is a positive feature of the partnership. Opportunities for joint worship and celebrations are developing. Remembrance Day and Easter services have been enjoyed by both communities and support the distinctive Christian character of the school. Church services with the pupils are attended by parishioners and other members of both village communities. Links are developing between the school and its wider community. At present, understanding and evaluation of the school's performance are driven by the headteacher. Another member of staff is currently being developed as a church school leader so that leadership is distributed and more effective. This demonstrates leaders' awareness of the need for succession planning. There has been little training for staff and governors around the features of a distinctive Christian character. Governors are aware this as an area that needs to be developed further. They are currently in the process of reviewing the mission statement to make it more accessible. They are also becoming more involved in developing the vision. Systems that enable governors to monitor and evaluate the school as a church school are currently underdeveloped. Opportunities for parents to contribute to evaluation through sharing their views are also currently limited. They are not always aware of the distinctive characteristics of the values. Although leaders clearly describe the impact of collective worship and values on the life of the school, pupil awareness is inconsistent and not embedded. Consequently, whilst some learners can recognise what is special about the school as a church school, they are not always clear about the impact this has on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and wellbeing. Although improvements are relatively recent, there is evidence across the school of the positive impact of initiatives implemented by the headteacher, supported by governors and the incumbent.

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