



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Digby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street
Digby
LN4 3LZ

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire

Date of inspection: 13th February 2015

Date of last inspection: February 2010

School's unique reference number: 120519

Headteacher: Graham Boyall

Inspector's name and number: Anne Platt 807

School context

Digby Church of England Primary School is a small rural school, with 93 children on roll. Almost all the pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is in line with national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average. The majority of teaching staff have joined the school in the current academic year. The school serves the village of Digby, and surrounding areas. A hard federation is in place with the nearby church school of Dunston St Peter's.

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

- Digby school community promotes explicit embedded Christian values that contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners.
- The impact of collective worship and religious education (RE) on all aspects of school life including attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher is ensuring that this is a caring and inclusive community, firmly rooted in its Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Increase pupil' confidence in planning, leading and evaluating worship. This enables them to experience a sense of ownership in this key area of church school life.
- Ensure robust monitoring and evaluation of church school distinctiveness involves the whole school community as an integral part of school improvement planning.
- Develop all staff and governors in their strategic role as leaders in a church school.

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

The headteacher provides clear leadership in building a Christian school community where pupils strive to achieve their full potential regardless of their ability or background. Current school data for 2014/15 shows an improving picture across all the key stages. Vulnerable groups of pupils make good progress as a result of the impact of the Christian values, friendship, respect and honesty, which encourage success for all. The school has achieved Silver Youth Sport Trust Mark 2013/14, Healthy Schools Mark and Bronze School Games Mark which reflects the personal development and well being of pupils. Systems are in place to nurture pupils in this inclusive Christian community where exclusions have reduced in the academic year. Positive attitudes are rewarded with praise in sharing assemblies and the weekly attendance cup. Parents describe the school as, 'proactive in ensuring pupils' welfare and spiritual development.' This includes links with the local Anglican and neighbouring Methodist churches which enhance the school family bond and enable the school's Christian character to grow and develop. Through consultation with the whole school community, the fifteen core Christian values have been reduced to three to make them more explicit and relevant. The impact of this work is seen in the way that pupils talk with confidence about these three values and how they affect their lives and relationships. Pupils say, 'our values of friendship, respect and honesty enabled us to work together successfully when we played a game taken from the Paralympics for blind people.' The values, taught through collective worship and RE make a strong contribution to the social and moral development of pupils. School provides a positive learning environment where pupils are proud to belong, feel valued and achieve well. An external school mosaic and displays in the entrance porch proclaim that the visitor is entering a church school. Together with worship space in the hall, vibrant RE displays and planned areas of reflection for each classroom the learning environment enhances pupils' spiritual development. Pupils also value outdoor reflective spaces such as the willow structure, wildlife and gardening areas, speaking with enthusiasm about, 'appreciating God and focusing on nothing but him.' Through a sense of awe and wonder in the natural world, pupils have achieved Royal Horticultural Show 5 star Gardening School, Silver Gilt medals at the Chelsea Flower Show and Food For Life Bronze. This shows improvement since the last inspection. RE makes a positive contribution to learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) and to the Christian character of the school. Pupils know that it is important to learn about Christianity and other religions and that what they learn gives meaning to their everyday lives. To promote SMSC development since the last inspection, pupils have visited a Hindu temple and synagogue in Leicester. Local visits have included Lincoln Cathedral, St Andrew's Church Potterhanworth and Holy Trinity Church Martin. Recent visitors to the school have included an Indian experience day and representatives from the local Christian communities. This shows improvement since the last inspection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship holds a place of importance in the life of the school and is well managed by the headteacher. The daily act of worship is seen by pupils, staff, governors and parents as central to the day to day life of the school. It has a Christian focus and is viewed as a time when the school's core values, friendship, respect and honesty are celebrated, shared and discussed. Pupils' attitude to collective worship reflects the quality of daily worship and its impact on their spiritual and moral development. A Year 2 pupil said, 'our theme today was kindness and I asked someone I saw on their own at playtime to join in our game.' This demonstrates the impact of Christian values such as kindness on their daily lives. Bible stories are a regular part of worship and stories focusing on the life of Jesus, are central to the planning. This together with the emphasis on prayer and reflection is enabling pupils to develop an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The spiritual development of pupils has been strengthened through writing their own prayers which are used in collective worship, lunchtimes and the end of the day. The parish church is currently in an interregnum, but pupils speak about how they value, enjoy and learn from the Bible stories shared by the Methodist minister and lay

readers. The church is used to celebrate key festivals in the church year and parents appreciate how this has developed a sense of community for all. Collective worship is monitored by staff and governors to evaluate its effectiveness through attendance at services and discussion with parents. Pupils are involved in this process through governor monitoring, but would enjoy providing more regular feedback. Pupils contribute to collective worship through singing, prayer and role play but need to develop their role in planning, leading and evaluating worship. This was an area for development from the last inspection and although progress has been made, continues to be a priority. Key Stage 2 pupils would appreciate worshipping in separate key stages to explore themes in more depth.

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

The focused Christian leadership of the headteacher, strengthened through the hard federation with Dunston St Peter's, is at the core of the school's effectiveness. Governors are committed to the life and work of the school and are welcome visitors. Governors said, 'we develop each individual as a child of God.' Since the last inspection the community at all levels has reviewed the school's core values. These reflect the Christian distinctiveness of the school. They are understood and articulated by all members of the school community and have a positive impact on achievement and well-being. There are close and supportive links between the school and the church. Pupils visit the church regularly for services. Parents appreciate that these visits are helping pupils to see the church as a welcoming place and developing their understanding of Christian worship and practice. They said, 'we value our children attending services and the opportunity to discuss it with them afterwards.' Parents were involved in supporting the school visit to Lincoln Cathedral for the Church Schools Festival. Parents also value the Bishop's visitor who takes an active role in the school community. The headteacher and school leaders undertake some monitoring activities to ensure that the distinctive Christian character of the school continues to grow and develop. However these procedures need embedding in practice including contributions from all stakeholders. Preparation for future Christian leadership is encouraged through teamwork across the federation. However, due to a high staff turnover at Digby, this is an area for development. All staff and governors need to fully utilise training opportunities to develop strategic leadership. RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. RE is effectively led and managed across the federation. However, the coordinator needs to develop her role in first hand monitoring and evaluating the subject at Digby. The school has made progress towards addressing all of the development areas identified at the last inspection.

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