

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Happisburgh Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Street, Happisburgh, Norfolk NR12 0AB

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Diocese

Norwich

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Norfolk

Date of inspection

6 July 2017

Date of last inspection

July 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

VA Primary 121039

Acting headteacher

Charley Heaps

Inspector's name and number

Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Currently there are 78 pupils on roll in this school on the Norfolk coast, which is smaller than the national average. The school gained Voluntary Aided status in 2012. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is above the national average. The rector who is also vice chair of governors has been in post since May 2014. The acting headteacher was appointed in January 2017, currently has a classroom responsibility and is also the religious education [RE] subject leader.

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

- The level of pastoral care and concern for the individual pupil in this welcoming and accepting family community enables pupils to grow in confidence and achieve academically, socially and personally.
- The close partnership between church, school and village in this coastal community is built on Christian values which are integral to daily life at church, home and school.
- The growing importance of prayer and reflection in the life of this church school enriches the worshipping life and spiritual journeys of the whole community.

Areas to improve

- Extend the monitoring of collective worship and ensure that the regular and rigorous monitoring and assessment in RE is embedded in the life of the school to inform future planning and progress. This includes pupils' self-assessment as part of the regular gathering of evidence throughout the school from Reception to Year 6.
- Enrich pupils' experience of collective worship by enabling them to plan, lead and evaluate worship more frequently.
- Enable pupils to meet people of faith, from Christianity and other faith traditions, to nurture their spiritual and cultural development.

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

Happisburgh's Christian foundation is rooted in its core values of respect, tolerance and mutual support which underpin its vision of learning for life. This is very clearly seen in the very good pastoral care, guidance and support for all members of its family. This enables pupils to achieve academically, socially and personally. Attendance is good and exclusions very rare, with most pupils making good progress, given their starting points, because of the support which is in place. This is especially true for Key Stage One. Currently, the proportion of pupils who have emotional needs or special educational needs in Year 5 is above average. So the school works closely with their pastoral support worker as well as outside agencies to address any barriers to learning and focus on strategies for each individual pupil. All achievement, however small, is valued and all pupils are treated the same by enthusiastic teachers. The pastoral support worker runs a friendship club twice weekly to support pupils who have social and emotional needs. For example, during times of death and bereavement, the pupils themselves provided 'some amazing answers to help other children'. In addition, one to one sessions with pupils and parents are provided by the pastoral support worker, who is passionate about all the school does. She is of the firm belief that pupils need to be happy and their wellbeing affects their education. Consequently, she enables pupils to have a voice so they can grow in confidence, be proud of themselves and achieve. Pupils enjoy roles of responsibility and value this Christian community. Staff comment on its inclusivity, respect compassion, kindness, friendship and forgiveness. They recognise that the close relationships with families help develop pupils' social and emotional literacy and enable pupils to reach their full potential. Relationships are good, with worship and RE making good contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development and to the Christian character of the school.

Charitable fundraising, such as the work for Christian Aid and Operation Christmas Child, is an important part of school life, raising pupils' global awareness and living the values. In this rural and coastal community, pupils' experience is mainly mono-cultural and as a result, their experience of diverse communities and cultures as well as their understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith is currently limited. The school has already identified the need for pupils to meet people of faith from Christianity as well as other faith traditions. The school has begun to address this in part, as identified in the school improvement and development plan, but it is very much in its early stages. In addition the school would like to 'do more' in terms of its charity work as an expression of thankfulness, generosity and service within the context of learning for life, which is much talked about in school. This too has been identified in school plans, but is not currently in place.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a time of reflection, prayer and celebration and an important daily event for adults and pupils at Happisburgh. This is because the strong community links between church, school and village in this rural and coastal community enrich the worshipping experiences and spiritual journeys of the whole community. Worship follows a pattern of gathering, engaging, responding and sending. The clergy are welcome and regular visitors and church/school links are strong, with the rector as well as the Baptist minister leading worship. Harvest, Christmas, Remembrance and Leavers' services all take place in church. Pupils can explain the symbolism of Christingle well. Pupils enjoy the church services, which parents also support. When the time for the carol service was changed to a Friday morning instead of evening, to enable more parents to attend, there was standing room only. Pupils have met the diocesan suffragan bishop who led collective worship on prayer. Such experiences help pupils understand what it means to be part of the diocesan family. Pupils say, 'he taught us about Jesus with a story from the Bible'. Prayer and reflection are growing in importance. For example, pupils now say that the most important part of worship for them is time for reflection. They use this to 'think how we can have a positive start to our day'. They use their waterfall of reflection in the school library, which includes prayer pebbles for personal reflection and prayer. This supports their spiritual development well. The school prayer is prayed every lunchtime. Some pupils receive Holy Communion and say this is an important part of the worship they enjoy at school. Pupils comment that 'Bible stories help me to be truthful'. When reflecting on the story of Zacchaeus, they

know the importance of telling the truth, which is their current value. More importantly, they add that, 'the best thing in the world is to have friends'. Pupils enjoy taking part in drama in worship and staff and governors evaluate worship. For example, they comment on the hymns sung may 'link to how we are starting a new chapter in our lives'. However, the school has identified that extending the monitoring of worship and enabling pupils to plan, lead and evaluate worship more frequently would enrich their experience of worship. Currently, this is not in place. Pupils can name prophets, such as Moses and are growing in their understanding of The Holy Trinity. They explain, 'the Holy Trinity is God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit'. They describe Jesus as a very compassionate person, but their understanding of The Holy Spirit is less secure. Worship inspires pupils to social action, such as responding to Children in Need and Nelson's Journey.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Standards in RE are judged in line with core subjects across the school. Over the last eighteen months, pupils are now asking more questions and thinking at a deeper level, with more independent learning taking place. Other approaches to teaching and learning in RE are also used, such as 'Understanding Christianity'. The focus on deepening Christian teaching as well as RE days underpins the school's distinctive Christian character. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of Christianity and know the Christian story of salvation well. Pupils enjoy RE and it now has a high profile in school, supporting their spiritual development. This is because the RE subject leader is the acting headteacher and leads by example, teaching older pupils. She attends training and is able to share good practice with the rest of the school. She carries out book scrutinies and has identified lesson observations as part of the action plan, going forward. Currently, these do not happen due to pressures of time. Pupils own self-assessment is currently not in place. Some pupils say that, 'RE challenges me as sometimes we have not learned about it before and it makes me think about it'. They know that in RE, as in all subjects, they 'must keep trying and believe in ourselves to improve'. Consequently, they persevere, achieve and enjoy their learning. Pupils are keen to meet people of faith, and recently enjoyed a visit from a Muslim parent who spoke about Ramadan to them. They say that they 'like having people from other religions in to show how they pray and fast for a month'. They go on to say they would 'find it exciting to visit places of worship other than St Mary's Church'. Teaching in RE is effective, with older pupils reflecting well on answering the question; 'What instructions did God give to humans to treat the earth as God's good creation?' This shows deeper thinking about stewardship and responsibility. For example, pupils comment, 'God would be devastated to discover what they had done when he looked down'. They are firm in their views to 'treat our world respectfully' and to follow God's advice on not to 'follow in disrespectful people's paths'.

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

Happisburgh's Christian vision of 'learning for life to be the best that they can be' underpins the curriculum and everyday school life. Developing, growing and learning within this nurturing Christian family environment is at the heart of the school's ethos. Whilst turbulent leadership over a period of time has made it difficult for governors to be strategic in their monitoring, they have a strong drive to improve all areas of the curriculum. In addition, the acting headteacher has a classroom role which means she has insufficient time to fulfil her leadership role beyond the day to day necessities. Leaders know what needs to be done, but currently do not have the time or resources to implement and sustain the changes they would like. Areas for development are included as a standing item on governing body agendas so the school's ethos and Christian values are regularly discussed. Governors support staff training. For example, links with the diocese are very supportive, with the school benefitting from training and support. Whilst areas from the last inspection have been addressed and worship and RE meet statutory requirements, the school acknowledges the monitoring of RE is in a transition stage. Currently, there is no formal governor monitoring of RE, either as a subject in its own right or as a vehicle for developing the Christian character of the school. However, monitoring is featured in the school improvement and development plan and is a priority. Currently, the chair of governors monitors community links. A wellbeing governor has been appointed, showing the importance of this supportive aspect of church school life on personal and

academic achievement. Staff value being part of this team who work well together in a spirit of laughter, praising their leadership team. They say, 'We excel in making a fun environment for the children and endorsing our school values. We are not a school for Christians but a Christian school for everyone.' Relationships with the church and parish council are good, with clergy leading worship and church members helping with activities, such as hearing pupils read. Parents speak highly of the links with St Mary's Church and its rector who 'loves the children and knows them by name'. As a result, parents too feel welcome in church. The school regularly features in 'The Coastal Group of Parishes' magazine. In addition, parents praise the fact that their children talk about the school's values at home and how they are developing a mature sense of responsibility.

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