



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Walsingham Church of England Primary School

Wells Road

Walsingham

Norfolk

NR22 6DU

**Previous SIAMS grade:** N/A

**Current inspection grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 5 May 2016

Date of last inspection: N/A

School's unique reference number: 138797

Executive Headteacher: Mary Dolan

Inspector's name and number: Pat George 845

#### School context

Walsingham is a very small village school. It became a voluntary aided (VA) school in 2013 when it joined the newly formed four school Pilgrim Federation. There are 28 pupils on roll taught in two classes. The vast majority of pupils are White British with above average disadvantaged and pupils with additional needs, including those with education, health and care plans. OFSTED January 2014 gave a judgement of good. The federation has one executive headteacher, in post for 3 years, a recently appointed deputy and one governing body.

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

- The Christian family community is underpinned by clear, core Christian values which have had a significant positive impact on pupil behaviour, wellbeing and confidence.
- There is a clearly evident emphasis on 'Irresistible Learning' in which Christian values are intrinsic and everyone plays their part.
- Pupils' developing response in religious education (RE) and their good understanding of the purpose of prayer and reflection contribute to the strength of the school as a Christian community.
- The governing body has a clear strong vision for the further development of the school.

#### Areas to improve

- To develop pupil role in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship and a pupil link to the vision, values and ethos committee of the governing body to deepen their understanding of worship and its role within the school community.
- To develop age-appropriate pupil understanding of the Trinity to support pupil understanding of Anglican tradition in worship.
- Develop a clear definition of spirituality and a policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education (SMSC) including developing knowledge of other faiths.

- To further develop the focus on Christian church school values by highlighting their central role in delivering the British values on display in classrooms in order to increase pupil understanding of Christian values in their daily lives and the wider community.

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

The vision and Christian values are the result of a collaboration between federation staff and governors. The vision is rightly said to support the school as a strong distinctive Christian place of learning, rooted in faith and Anglican tradition. The Christian values of love, compassion, kindness, tolerance and respect have developed through the mutual support of the federation schools. Relationships between adults and children are very positive and act out the federation Christian values of kindness, respect, tolerance and love and compassion every day. The distinctive Christian character supports pupils at all stages to do their best through the *We all play our part* section of the threefold aim, which is clearly embedded across the school. The other two parts are their chosen Christian values and irresistible learning. The whole school community lives out the values and pupils can clearly articulate the current value and the impact on their learning. They explain that the values help them to work well together, to support each other and always try hard. They are aware of those in need and can talk about how they could help them. They spoke of the way they all play together at playtimes and how the spiritual garden makes them think of God. The behaviour agreement signed by all children also evidences this aim. Flexible and positive learning support have an ongoing impact on achievement, attainment and progress, especially for those with special educational needs and disabilities and more vulnerable pupils. Disadvantaged pupils are achieving in line with their peers, sometimes better. The recent successful integration of a managed moved child is evidence of the impact of this. Pupils say everyone is kind, teachers always help them and they all do their best. Parents are clear it is a family school with family values. "School has the same values as my family." Support staff with a long history of working at the school feel that the ethos and values of the school as a church school have helped bring the village together. This in turn has a positive impact on pupils as they are now more confident that their school is valued by their community. Pupils are very clear everyone gets on and no one is treated unfairly. Parents say there is no bullying, discrimination or racism. One grandparent cited the inclusive welcome his granddaughter had had on joining the school. Learners are aware that Christianity is a worldwide faith but cannot yet discuss this with a depth of knowledge. RE supports the Christian character of the school by providing opportunities to explore key concepts and questions, eg. what is mercy? and is this part of reconciliation? RE also provides pupils with a developing understanding of how people of faith live their lives and how that relates to them. They are unsure of diversity and difference within Christianity.

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

The children clearly value worship and can talk about the impact on their lives. They spoke of it making them think about their behaviour towards each other and that it helps them know about God. One child could articulate. "Assembly is about awards and news. Worship is about God". They feel worship is fun, it teaches them about bible stories, how to behave, for example with respect, the need to apologise and be honest. It gives them an opportunity to talk about things. They hold the view that if there was no worship the themes would still be there but they wouldn't be as effective. They participate with enthusiasm and confidence, singing joyfully and sharing the actions they have made up to accompany songs. The display board supports the linking of values to worship and there is a focus table with a prayer candle and bibles. The children are very confident with the purpose of prayer and reflection; to help with problems, say sorry, ask for help, for their families and to feel closer to God. A pupil recently commented "I think I will try a pray today, I haven't done that before." This together with the choice of songs supports their spiritual development well. Prayer has a high focus evidenced by the prayer tree, prayer box and pupil confidence in sharing their prayers in class and at the end of worship. They

feel worship helps them in RE. They enjoy Open the Book and their role in church services such as Harvest and Easter and the federation founding service held every year. Worship is supported by the wide range of people who lead worship; staff, the incumbent, youth team. Pupils say "If we weren't a church school we wouldn't learn as much about the bible". There are strong links with the shrine at Walsingham as well as the local churches. Their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is still at early stages of development. Staff and governors evaluating worship and pupils being more involved in planning, leading and evaluating worship are currently less well developed areas for the school as is pupil understanding of the Trinity.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

The subject leader for the federation has had a clear impact on the development of RE in school. Pupils say it is one of their favourite subjects. The enthusiasm and knowledge and drive of the RE subject leader has played a big part in the raising of standards in RE. RE teaching is based on key big questions and themed questions in lessons, based on the core concepts. Pupils learn about religion and from religion and have opportunities to link this to the world around them. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect, answer deep questions and share their views and thinking. The input of RE into the distinctively Christian character of the school and its impact on SMSC is clearly evidenced by pupils. They can discuss similarities between different religions eg holy books. They can link themes in RE to their everyday lives eg. The needy, and to what is happening in the world around them. They can make links between RE, bible stories and collective worship. One pupil independently commented on the good Samaritan bible story (known from worship) as an example of mercy, linked to reconciliation. RE teaching is consistently good. The subject leader monitors regularly through lesson observations and reports to governors. All staff have had internal training and additional professional development from the diocese. Standards in RE are broadly in line with national. Evidence from lesson observations and work scrutiny show pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Vulnerable groups eg. pupil premium and SEND pupils make progress commensurate with their peers. Assessment in RE is in place with school trialling a new system which informs future planning, although the further development of an effective assessment system is still a priority in the action plan. Marking in RE is limited to comments with no examples of pupils responses, to deepen their thinking and understanding. School has rightly identified a priority for visits from people of other faiths to broaden pupils' experiences in RE.

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

A strength of the leadership has been the development enabled by joining the Pilgrim Federation. The school has been on a rapid and successful journey as a church school since becoming part of the federation. The executive headteacher and federation deputy supported by the senior teacher provide strong leadership based on a vision for the school which is consistently clearly articulated and based on Christian values. Their firm focus on improving learning behaviours has been delivered by a whole school commitment and consistency in acting out those Christian values. Governors were involved in developing the vision with staff and are committed to the school's development as a church school. The new single equality plan includes sections based on valuing all God's children. All governors are involved in monitoring collective worship and there is an effective vision, values and ethos committee. Care for each other, staff and pupils is at the heart of the everyday life of the school. The 'Irresistible Learning' focus is having a positive impact on pupils' learning journeys. Progress overall is good and pupils with additional needs also make good progress from their starting points. Standards are in line with national expectations, an ongoing improvement. The RE subject leader has worked with the diocesan RE advisor and all staff have received good professional development both in RE and church school issues. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has a remit which includes supporting the continued development of staff and this remit provides another aspect to the sustainability of the vision and values of the school as a church school. The school has a good relationship with the Diocese and the Diocesan School Support Officer provides effective support and guidance. The Diocesan Play Van visits weekly and the number of children

accessing this is rising. The incumbent has a presence in school and a good relationship with pupils. He contributes to the teaching of Christianity, leading worship on a weekly basis. Parents are now more engaged with school than at the beginning of the federation and are very positive about the church school status and change in the culture of the school. One commented, "I was unsure at first but now I see the value of the ethos to my children." They are more supportive of school events both in school and in church eg. all attend parents' evenings and many join the children for worship in the church. The leadership team has put in place a sustainable ethos and vision and this is equipping pupils well for the next stage of their life journey. The school is proud to be part of the Pilgrim Federation, evidenced by observation of daily life in school and discussion with pupils, parents and staff.

SIAMS report May 2016 Walsingham Church of England Primary School Norfolk NR22 6DU