

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bures CEVC Primary

Nayland Road, Bures, Suffolk CO8 5BX.

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Suffolk
Date of inspection	14 June 2018
Date of last inspection	6 December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 124692
Headteacher	Ruth Slater
Inspector's name and number	Caroline Clarke 711

School context

Bures is a smaller than average primary school with 210 pupils on roll. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a new headteacher in post since the last inspection and there have been a number of other teaching staff changes. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and / or disabilities is similar to national averages and the proportion of pupil premium pupils is below average. Since the last inspection the school has started to admit Y5 and Y6 pupils, in line with the local authority school organisational review and therefore is now a Nursery - Y6 school. The school works very closely with the Bures parish church which is nearby.

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

- The strength of Christian purpose, team work and enthusiasm to continually improve and embed Christian values has ensured that all actions from the previous inspection have been actively addressed and the impact of this is starting to be seen.
- Bures is a nurturing, positive, family community, enriched and strengthened by an embedded and very meaningful partnership with the local church.
- There is good communication with parents who speak very highly of the impact of the school's church values and distinctiveness on their children.

Areas to improve

- To establish a Christian distinctiveness group, including pupils, one role of which will be for pupils to be regularly involved in planning acts of worship themselves, and for staff, governors and pupils to monitor these acts of worship and both identify and measure the impact of any changes made.
- To create a whole school reflection space and use this and classroom reflection spaces to embed links between collective worship and all aspects of school life including attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- To provide further whole school training for staff in relation to aspects of Christian distinctiveness and leadership, to ensure this is a priority across the whole team.

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

The Christian values of the school are fully understood and articulated by pupils, staff, governors and parents. The whole school community has recently been actively involved in updating these values and they have identified six core values: tolerance, responsibility, friendship, courage, forgiveness and compassion. Pupils talk about the values with confidence and understanding, for example one said, 'At our school you will see children playing kindly together because it is our responsibility to care for each other and show compassion, like Jesus does.' Evidence seen on the day of the inspection confirms that these core Christian values are embedded throughout the curriculum and in all aspects of daily school life.

Opportunities for spiritual development are established. Pupils are keen to use their classroom reflection areas more meaningfully and develop a whole school space either inside or outside where they can think, reflect and be prayerful. Opportunities have not been provided to help pupils explore personal prayer and to feel empowered to take the lead in this area of the school's development. The school is full of colourful, interactive and informative displays that capture its Christian character, for example as soon as you enter the school you are aware of its Christian distinctiveness through the cross, the school prayer and a display about courage which is the current school focus value.

Pupils know what makes their school Christian. For example, they visit the church every month, they talk about Bible stories every week, they pray and sing songs about God daily, there are crosses on display and they have a worship table. However they do not just see these aspects of school life as visual reminders of their values but also understand that they have their roots in Christian teaching.

The pupils are now facilitators at the Faith and Festival Days which are run by the RE Leader and members of the Baptist and Anglican churches locally, after several years as participants. Pupils decided to create a 'waterfall of praise' from discussions about thank you prayers, which was later proudly displayed in the local church. Having listened to a Bible story about Jesus fishing, the pupils chose to weave their ideas about Jesus through a fishing net. Such activities have had impact both by embedding pupils' understanding of Christianity across the school and developing the leadership role of pupils as facilitators.

Behaviour and learning attitudes demonstrate respect, tolerance and compassion towards both peers and adults. Pupils say that they enjoy their school because everyone is kind and helpful and there are staff they can go to if they need help. Governors see the staff as good role models for the pupils and parents state that; 'All the staff are very kind and approachable. They want to listen and help.'

Data shows progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is improving and attainment is likely to be above national averages for reception class children and pupils in Y2 and Y6 this year.

Attendance is rapidly improving and meets national targets for all groups, as a result of staff taking steps to nurture and support key families, ensuring that their children have a positive learning experience and therefore want to be in school daily.

Religious education (RE) supports the character of the school, giving pupils space to relate Christian values to their daily lives and therefore making these experiences meaningful. For example, one pupil talked about how we are all responsible for looking after our possessions just like we should all look after God's beautiful world and be responsible for it now and in the future.

Pupils have a range of cross curricular experiences that help them to understand diversity; for example, they have taken part in a wider interfaith week where pupils had the opportunity to meet a Jew, a Muslim and a Sikh and learn about their faiths. Pupils have visited a range of places of worship related to different faiths and worship traditions, including a mosque, a synagogue and a mandir, as well as a cathedral and an Anglican church.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils say that they enjoy collective worship and their involvement in its delivery has developed considerably since the last inspection. The impact of this can be seen in their increased engagement and the thoughts they contribute to whole school prayer. For example they now throw large dice to help them decide on a gathering message and a sending out message and contribute their ideas to the daily teaspoon prayer. One explained that; 'the teaspoon prayer is where you are given a topic for example 'peace' and you have to think of a thank you prayer, a sorry prayer and a please prayer linked to it.' Although pupils understand the purpose of prayer their use of prayer beyond worship is embryonic but is something both pupils and staff say they are keen to encourage and develop further through the use of reflection spaces.

Staff and pupils recognise worship as a distinct and special part of each day where there is a sense of belonging and the opportunity to listen, think, reflect and respond. The worship table has a Bible, candle and cross stored in a

treasure box. Pupils are invited to open the treasure at the start of an act of worship linked to the Bible reading; 'The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field.' Matthew chapter 13 verse 44.

Collective worship is thoroughly planned and delivered by a range of staff, clergy and visitors, using good resources. As a result individual acts of worship are informative and engaging. Worship is planned around the school's Christian values, combined with the church calendar, and the worship table is always covered with a cloth in the appropriate liturgical colour. As a result, pupils understand the connection between the church calendar and the liturgical colours used in the Anglican church. The school's Christian values enable pupils to link the Bible to their own choices and behaviours, as well as the expectations of the school.

Pupils have enjoyed the services at the local church that they have led and say that they would like more opportunities to lead worship but especially opportunities to plan the worship themselves too. Staff and governors talk with enthusiasm about the services led by the pupils at church that have explored big questions such as, 'What is Eucharist?' and 'What is baptism?'

The incumbent leads worship fortnightly and has also led meetings for staff and governors about what it means to be a church school. This has resulted in him being clearly recognisable around the school and very much part of the school community. Likewise the school is very involved in the life of the church, regularly visiting and worshipping there, promoting church events such as Messy Church and benefitting from other church visitors coming into school very regularly such as the 'Church Link', the curate and the Open the Book Team. This strong and effective reciprocal arrangement means that both the school and church communities are supported pastorally, spiritually enriched and constantly learning from and benefitting one another.

Collective worship is used well to enable pupils to reflect and be prayerful and calm. Each classroom has a reflection area but these are embryonic and have yet to be fully used and understood by all pupils.

Governors have monitored acts of collective worship and the school has collected pupil views in relation to worship. However, the impact of this is yet to be seen in terms of feedback being acted upon and changes being implemented.

Pupils have a good understanding of how important Jesus Christ is to Christian worship and the concept of God as Father, Son and Spirit. One pupil explained that these are the three parts of one God like water, steam and ice are the three different ways in which water can exist. Another pupil when shaking a jar of glitter and water, that was part of a reflection station, said 'We are the glitter and the water is like the holy spirit which is all around us.'

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

The Christian vision of Bures School, 'With a strong Christian ethos, we promote belief and faith in ourselves and others, courageously sharing, caring and forgiving, whilst celebrating both our similarities and differences' has been created by all members of the school community and is therefore owned and understood by all. As a result, the vision is part of what makes the school distinctively Christian and is a central and vital part of leadership at all levels.

The impact of this vision can be seen by the key status given to RE across the school, the Christian character evident through discussions with parents, pupils, staff and governors and the fact that well-being of all at Bures is so central to the work of the school and the church.

A strength of the school is the passion and enthusiasm of the headteacher to work collaboratively in moving the school forward. A good example of this is how she and the RE Leader have worked in partnership and continue to do so to develop, adapt and strengthen the Faith and Festival Days across the school. However, this strength of Christian leadership has yet to be embedded across the whole of the school leadership team. Training in relation to cohesive and distributed Christian leadership has not yet been made available for all staff and governors.

A strength of the school is the willingness and desire of governors and local clergy to share their knowledge and support the school in all aspects of its work both pastorally and spiritually. This has involved governors in monitoring aspects of school improvement including those linked to Christian distinctiveness and ensuring through their strategic role that school improvement planning has a clear focus on Bures and its effectiveness as a church school. Through their strong working relationship with the headteacher, they measure the impact of their work in relation to agreed actions, such as those from the previous inspection. The church has been the bedrock for the school during changing times and has been able to offer a sense of support and act as an anchor, greatly appreciated by staff, pupils and parents. The partnership with the parochial church council has also developed considerably since the last inspection, providing benefits for both the school and the church through the exchange of ideas and resources. This is an action from the previous inspection that has been fully met.

The school has good communication with parents, who speak very highly of the school's church values and distinctiveness. One parent explained how she had chosen the school because it was a church school and she felt that the morals it teaches influence the behaviour and relationships between the pupils.