

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Runcton Holme CE Primary School (DEMAT)

School Road, Runcton Holme, Norfolk, PE33 0EL	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Ely
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 st October 2014
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust Holy Cross Federation
Date of inspection	05 February 2018
Date of last inspection	12 & 13 March 2008
Type of school and unique reference number	141228
Executive Headteacher	Emma Zeil
Inspector's name and number	Christopher J Allen (847)

School context

Runcton Holme CE Primary School is part of the Holy Cross Federation and is also part of the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT). It was inspected by OFSTED in October 2017 and judged to be inadequate and placed into special measures. The current executive head has been in post since October 2017 after working within the federation before this. The school is significantly smaller than the average primary school with 47 on roll. There is an extended interregnum in the benefice which is being overseen by the rural dean. There are several governor vacancies in the federation as recruitment has been difficult.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Runcton Holme CE Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The impact of the rewritten vision is rapidly improving progress across the school but standards are still below national expectations at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Learners have experience of prayer and recognise it as a time they can speak directly to God, but many do not yet value prayer as part of their daily life.
- Whilst there is an understanding of spirituality amongst school leaders the definition of this is unclear and time within the curriculum is not planned as it is for social, moral and cultural experiences.
- The teaching of religious education (RE) is good at key stage 2; however, where this is less good in key stage one it is because learning does not challenge higher ability children and it is unclear in planning how the skills of enquiry are developed in a class comprising more than one year-group.

Areas to improve

- To consider how to fully embed the rewritten school vision in biblical teachings and use this to support learners to confidently articulate it and its significance to them as individuals.
- Ensure school leaders have a clear definition of spirituality that is understood by adults and pupils with opportunities planned within the curriculum for it to be developed.
- For school leaders to actively support the RE subject lead and provide sufficient resources for the role of monitoring and evaluating RE so they are enabled to action identified improvements and make teaching and learning in RE consistently good.

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

Runcton Holme CE Primary School's community recognise that its values are distinctively Christian and acknowledge the difference they make to learners' lives. Parents recognise that the school supports those who are Christian, those of other faiths and those with no faith. They see this through the moral standards set by the school, one said 'The school sets high moral values, values that are Christian but are also for life – they give our children a good foundation for how to live'. This is supported by the vision 'Learning for life together'. However learners do struggle to articulate the vision and to recognise the core Christian values of the school at times – this is not currently made relevant to them through biblical teachings. The recently rewritten vision for the school is aspirational in wanting every child 'to achieve well in our lessons'. It recognises the importance of the roles of everyone in the school community and was written with all members of the community through consultation. However current attainment, whilst better than recent years, is still below national expectations in each year group. Progress is an improving picture and shows the school's vision is beginning to have an impact on learning in the school. Attendance is above the national average and children enjoy coming to school. Social, moral and cultural education is planned well in the school and supported through a wide variety of activities such as a visit to the O2 Arena for the Young Voices project. Whilst spirituality is understood in the school community this is limited and lacks both a clear definition by school leaders as well as consideration of how the school's curriculum may support this in the future. Work has been done to help learners to understand Christianity as a multicultural worldwide faith; they are confident and respectful of diversity as a result but struggle with the deeper understanding of this. Learners behave well in school and have good relationships with each other and with the adults who work with them. They generally see that these relationships underpin the Christian character of the school, one learner said 'I like coming to school as we learn to care for each other and the adults show us how to help each other out'. RE contributes to the Christian distinctiveness of the school by exploring key concepts and providing some planned opportunities to allow learners to delve deeper into the values explored in collective worship. In doing so the school now has some meaningful connections in RE and worship that can be developed further to allow learners to articulate confidently the impact of these values on their daily lives and demonstrate clearly the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Collective worship is recognised as important in the life of the school by learners and adults alike. Most learners engage with enthusiasm, sing with energy and speak positively about collective worship. One learner said it was 'a calm point in a busy day where we think about love and care for others'. The school follows the diocesan plans for collective worship and study different key themes regularly – such as agape, the love of God for man and man for God. It is clear that the messages and teachings from collective worship do have some impact on learners' wider lives and they do know some biblical stories and their meanings. However this is not always linked to the school's core values or vision. Learners are aware of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and they are able to talk with growing confidence about this because work in RE lessons has supported their understanding in collective worship. The children have a limited knowledge of different Christian traditions in worship through the traditional festivals they celebrate such as Harvest and Christingle. There is more work to be done in developing this particularly around the story of Easter and other important events in the liturgical calendar such as Candlemas. Learners do have opportunities for prayer and focus this in collective worship through the prayer tree they have and the candle they light for prayers, one said 'when we pray it is a time we can talk directly to God and we know he is listening'. They also recognise prayer can be used to say thank you, seek help or forgiveness but they do not necessarily see prayer as important to them for their own personal spirituality. Work has been undertaken to address the development points from the last inspection; learners now choose the prayer each day in collective worship, read chosen Bible passages and lead on the music used. However it is clear they are not yet ready to plan and lead a full collective worship as they do not always understand the teachings of Jesus's life and its relevance to how they live themselves as children of God. Some feedback on learners' views of collective worship has been gathered by leaders but this has not been part of a formalised monitoring programme that includes learners regularly. The school also ensure that learners experience worship led by other people within the wider community such as the rural dean during a period of interregnum, and other groups such as a Christian puppet theatre.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The school has undertaken extensive training in the Understanding Christianity Project which has enabled it to

introduce a much more rigorous curriculum in RE. There is clear evidence of the impact of this project in children's books and portfolios that show big questions that dig deeper into specific aspects of Christianity. This is complemented by the study of other religions such as Islam and Judaism, where comparisons between world religions are being made. Standards in RE match those of other subjects, learners take as much care and pride in their work as in other subjects such as English. The school does not yet have an established formal assessment process in place and is working with the multi academy trust it is part of to address this. However, learners' work, particularly the collective RE portfolios for each class, demonstrate progress over time. Teaching is good in key stage two and is delivered by the new RE lead. The learners respond well to the knowledge and confidence of the teacher and are encouraged to make connections and take risks in their learning in RE. In key stage one teaching is not yet good because it does not challenge the most able learners enough and it does not consider the progression of skills needed to be taught in a class of more than one year-group. It is again evident that training and resources from the Understanding Christianity Project have been welcomed into this class but insufficient consideration has been given to how the learning is organised. As this work across the school is still relatively new learners do not yet have the deeper knowledge and understanding of Christianity that comes with time and embedding of a new curriculum. However learners do speak highly of RE and it is clear that there are developing links within collective worship and social, moral and cultural education in the school. One learner said 'RE lets us explore the bits in life that are hard to hold'. The last inspection set a development point for the school to develop learners' first-hand experiences in RE. This point has been met in many ways, including educational visits to Ely Cathedral and an audit of artefacts used in RE lessons as well as developing a curriculum plan with termly educational visits to a wide range of places such as Walsingham Shrine and a mosque in Peterborough. In doing so learners are experiencing RE in a lively way. This is then further developed through themed learning days across the federation such as exploring the Christian concept of salvation through art. RE in the school meets the National Society Statement of Entitlement (June 2016).

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

The recently appointed executive head teacher articulates and promotes the vision of the school with growing confidence and passion. This has impacted on the core values of love and care in becoming the main drivers in ensuring all decisions are rooted in the belief that every child is unique in God's creation. Sometimes decisions have been challenging to make but have been done so with the best interests of the learners in mind. As a result the school has an excellent reputation locally for being fully inclusive and valuing all God's children in how it nurtures and supports every child and family in its care. The head teacher says that the school's rewritten vision was 'not just for school but for a way of life'. The parents speak highly of the new leadership of the school and recognise the positive impact it already has had on the school and their children. Parents take an active role in the school and value the successful work of the parent teacher association which supports the social aspects of learning the school offers through extra-curricular clubs, fundraising events and providing funds for resources in the school. Parents also recognise that whilst the governing body is small it does work hard to ensure the best outcomes for the school. They also see the benefits of the school working within the Diocese of Ely Multi Academy Trust (DEMAT) and how this has brought greater accountability, support and capacity to the leadership of the school in recent months. DEMAT have provided leadership training for the new head as well as capacity support by using the network of good or better schools in the trust to provide school to school support in areas the school feels less confident with. In doing so the school is in the best place it can be to rapidly improve and sustain it to become good. It is clear that leaders, including governors, recognise the current challenges the school faces; they speak honestly and openly about these and have informed school improvement planning directly related to this. The leadership of RE is also relatively new, but there is a clear plan for improvement in place with measurable outcomes to evaluate the impact. A good example of impact from this is the new curriculum map using the Understanding Christianity Project. The head teacher supports the RE lead with additional non-contact time to implement the improvement plan; however, it is not yet sufficiently resourced to ensure improvement is rapid and sustained. The school also has maintained links with its local church St James' during an extended period of interregnum. They have worked closely with the rural dean to still hold church services at St James' and school as they recognise this is an important part of the school's life. They currently work closely with the church wardens to build on existing links such as a poetry competition for Mothering Sunday. Likewise they have worked hard to consider the needs of every member of the school and wider community through the creation of a remembrance garden at the front of the school. This is used on a very personal level for children in the school who have faced bereavement as a place of personal reflection and peace, but it is also for the wider community to use as part of events such as Armistice Day. The school and its community recognise that it is valued by the community it lives in and that it has high aspirations to succeed and thrive as an effective church school in the future.