



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

### Docking Church of England Foundation Primary School

Chequers Street  
Docking  
King's Lynn  
PE31 8LH

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Outstanding

**Current inspection grade:** Good

**Diocese:**

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 10 December 2015

Date of last inspection: 2 December 2010

School's unique reference number: 121207

Headteacher: Sarah Bocking

Inspector's name and number: Jean Johnson 608

#### School context

This small rural primary school with 116 pupils on roll joined the St Mary Federation of schools in July 2015 following a period of instability with rapid changes in leadership and staffing. The headteacher of the existing two schools in the federation became the executive head of all three schools on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015. A new deputy head was also appointed to the federation. The school was judged by Ofsted to require improvement in December 2014. Most pupils are of white British heritage and come from Docking and neighbouring villages. The school is close to the local church.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Docking Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The strong and effective partnership between the school and local church community consistently promotes the school's Christian character.
- School leaders have a shared vision for the school as a church school and are committed to embedding this within the federation.
- The Christian ethos of the school supports all learners and ensures good relationships within the school.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop spaces and provide more visual foci for reflection to develop pupils' personal spirituality.
- Ensure that monitoring by all stakeholders is evaluative, focuses on impact, and leads to further improvements to the Christian character of the school.
- Ensure that the school's distinctively Christian vision and values are made clear to all stakeholders to enable them to fully support and evaluate the school's future development.

**The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs**

### **of all learners**

Christian values are evident in the good behaviour seen and the inclusive, friendly relationships demonstrated by all members of the school community. This practical application of Christian values, for example trust and respect, firmly rooted in Biblical teaching, ensures that all pupils are valued and nurtured as individuals. As a result, they make at least expected progress during their time at the school and attendance is above the national average. Parents say that their children know that this is a church school with Christian values at its core. They say that their children enjoy coming to school and that those with additional needs are well supported. One pupil talked about how welcomed she had felt when she moved from another school. Pupils know that they have a special 'trusted adult' they can go to if they have a problem.

Pupils demonstrate their care for others by supporting a variety of charities for example the local food bank and the Operation Christmas Child shoebox appeal. The well-established links that the school has with an inner city school in Birmingham extend and deepen pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures. As a result of the practical experiences they have when they visit Birmingham, for example visiting a mosque, they ask questions about other faiths and make comparisons between them and Christianity. They have a growing awareness of Christianity as a world faith. A range of extra-curricular activities give pupils the opportunity to develop their individual interests and talents.

The recently appointed federation religious education (RE) co-ordinator is promoting an enquiry based approach to RE and pupils talk about how they are now encouraged to ask questions about for example the Church's celebration of Advent and Christmas. Reflections on 'Why Christians celebrate Christmas' enable pupils to gain a deeper understanding of its significance and place in the Christian year. Visits to the local church and the contribution of the incumbent, who also helps with the planning of RE, enhance their understanding of Christian beliefs and traditions.

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

The federation clergy and executive headteacher plan collective worship across the federation. All staff lead collective worship, reinforcing its centrality in the life of the school. Biblical teaching forms an important part of worship. Pupils say that they learn a lot about God and Jesus and that this influences the way they behave by, for example, encouraging them to help each other. They have a growing awareness of the Holy Spirit through the celebration of Pentecost. Christian values, for example trust are also explored and reinforced in collective worship. Pupils reflect on what these values mean to them in their everyday lives in the prayers that they write. They say that stories from the Bible, for example Noah's Ark, help them to understand the importance of trust.

The incumbent leads a weekly act of collective worship increasing pupils' understanding of major festivals in the Christian year for example Advent. Outside groups, for example GenR8 also play a part in ensuring that worship is interesting and engaging. Pupils enjoy watching these performances which bring Bible stories to life for them. Pupils' contribution to collective worship has increased since the last inspection and the school listens to their ideas about worship. They now act out Bible stories they have heard and read out their own prayers. They have recently begun to play music to create a focused calming start to worship. Parents are welcomed into weekly celebration assemblies in school. Some major festivals, for example Harvest, are celebrated in the church and a number of parents also attend these services.

Prayers, often written by pupils, are said at different times in the school day. Pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of prayer. One pupil talked about how thanking God for her food at lunch time made her think about others who didn't have any food and ask God's help for them.

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

The well-established partnership between the school and local church enabled foundation governors, including the incumbent, to play a significant part in sustaining the Christian character of the school during the period of instability and federation arrangements preceding the appointment of the current executive headteacher and federation deputy. As a result, although an agreed vision statement for the federation has yet to be finalised, the new school leaders have a clear vision for the school that strongly reflects its Christian foundation and ethos and are committed to further strengthening the Christian character of the school through the realisation of that vision. This vision is compatible with that of the other two schools in the federation. School leaders and governors have worked with staff and the Diocese to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the Christian character of the school and have identified appropriate areas for development. Immediate areas have already been addressed and the headteacher is working with staff and governors on other priorities. Staff training to support areas for development has taken place and more is planned for the future.

Parents, staff and pupils say that the incumbent is a familiar figure in the school providing practical support for staff and pupils as well as reinforcing its status as a church school within the community. Members of the local church community volunteer in school, acting as role models exemplifying Christian service. They run the popular Christian after school Thursday club as well as helping in classrooms. Parents say that their children also enjoy attending the monthly Saturday Kids Club in the church. The church is also used as a resource for the teaching of RE, enabling pupils to gain a good understanding of local Anglican traditions and practice.

The federation RE co-ordinator is supporting staff in their planning and delivery of the subject but has not yet monitored impact. She is attending training to develop her role and is using this to update and extend her practice and that of her colleagues across the federation. Governors have attended Diocesan training to develop their understanding of their role in supporting the Christian character of the school.

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