



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Brisley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>	School Road, Brisley, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5LH
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Norwich</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Norfolk
Date of inspection	<b>4<sup>th</sup> October 2016</b>
Date of last inspection	22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2011
School's unique reference number	121109
Headteacher	Kirsten Stibbon
Inspector's name and number	Christopher J Allen 847

### School context

Brisley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a small rural primary school with 93 pupils. These pupils come from the village of Brisley and surrounding villages, including a significant number from Whissonsett, where the school and village share a local incumbent and visit the church annually. The parish church of Brisley, St Bartholomew's, is over half a mile from the school and as a result regular school visits have to be carefully planned. The school has grown since the last inspection; it also has a new headteacher and completely new teaching staff. The current school benefits from a brand new purpose built EYFS class and outdoor space as well as a separate library both of which have reflective spaces regularly used by the children.

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

- Leaders consistently and confidently articulate, live out and promote the vision of the school that is distinctly Christian in its values.
- The school has strong links with the parish church, diocese and village community- who all contribute fully to the life of this Church of England primary school.
- The school's self-evaluation leads directly to the school's improvement planning and as a result good performance is achieved for all groups of learners.
- The distinctly Christian values of the school are made meaningful through daily collective worship, RE teaching and the whole school use of behaviour strategies such as PATHS (a programme for schools designed to facilitate the development of self-control, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills).

### Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for learners to develop a greater knowledge of diversity within the church through planned visits and visitors in school.
- In order to monitor the impact of collective worship on the school community by staff and pupils introduce formalised monitoring by senior leaders, governors and pupils.
- Ensure pupils' work captures the high quality enquiry cycles they experience from the 'big question' approach to the teaching and learning of religious education.

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

Brisley is a harmonious and happy school. It is underpinned by Christian values which are prominently displayed throughout the school. The pupils are able to explain how some of these values affect them, as they talk of the importance of respect and perseverance in their life in school. They also value members of the Christian community supporting the school and spoke warmly of a local member of the clergy who had sadly died. They are rewarded in the weekly celebration worship for demonstrating the school's core values and through a wide range of other achievements. The staff model the values well and as one member of staff said, 'you can see the Christian values of the school in how the children act and behave, as they know how they behave can affect the outcomes of others'. The school is fully inclusive and based on the principle of valuing all God's children. In the last year the school has worked hard to tackle some of the wider issues in society around homophobia and tolerance. This work has been particularly successful due to the support of the local incumbent and foundation governors of the school. Pupil outcomes are above national expectations at all levels for the last three years which reflects on the dedication of the staff, parents and governors for every child to fulfil their potential as children of God.

Attendance is good and exclusions are very rare. Pupil behaviour is good; they are welcoming and polite and show huge generosity of spirit to one another, demonstrating the impact of the schools work on PATHS. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy sharing what they do and what the school does – they know that their school is a church school and can explain what this means to them; one child said that they were 'all following Jesus and walking in his footsteps'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is recognised by the whole school community as being of high importance and the provision for this is good. It is strongly influenced by the core values of the school and in particular tolerance. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect both in worship and throughout the curriculum; they are supported to develop a curiosity of God's world and ask deep questions to support this. One parent spoke openly about 'my daughter talks about life, what happens when we die and who will care for those left behind. She is not frightened by any of this but genuinely interested'. Relationships are also very strong and there is a huge sense of being part of a community. The pupils are very aware of the importance of tolerance and show a high degree of respect for others; however they are not fully aware of the wider role of the church across the world and its diversity. They support charities locally such as the food bank, collecting produce at Harvest for this, but are less aware of the diverse role of the Christian church nationally or overseas.

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

Pupils enjoy collective worship recalling biblical stories such as Noah's Ark and The Lost Sheep; they share their messages and importance. They particularly like celebrating achievements and worship led by the local incumbent as they enjoy the lively songs and stories they can take part in. However, few pupils spoke of collective worship as being a time to talk to God, although they recognised the value of the whole community meeting together.

Collective worship is carefully planned by the worship coordinator and local clergy and meets statutory requirements. It is centred on the school values, the liturgical year and Christian festivals. The weekly pattern of worship gives pupils opportunities to worship in different ways and the fact that it is led by staff, the vicar or members of local churches, allows them to experience different traditions. A conducive atmosphere is created in the hall using music; lighting a candle and singing which makes children understand the importance of this special time of their school day. Wall displays of the liturgical year and art work reflecting a diocesan project on fruits of the Holy Spirit help to create a reflective space for worship. Pupils enjoy services in the church at Harvest, Christmas and Easter which are well attended by parents, who spoke of the Christian traditions they uphold. Year 6 pupils are involved in planning and leading worship each Friday and other pupils are often included in worship and as a result children feel included in the worship of the school. Monitoring is informally undertaken by senior leaders but does not have a strong focus upon how key messages from worship are then seen in the positive relationships pupils and adults have nor how respectful and tolerant pupils are; both reflect the school's Christian ethos. Pupils see prayer as important to their lives and are confident to share a prayer in collective worship, one child said 'prayer tells God what we are thankful for, he can hear us when we pray and help us'. Older children write prayers that are used daily; one child spoke of the comfort it brought him 'I pray for ill people at home and it really helps me'. Pupils' understanding of the Trinity is developing appropriately; they have explored this and produced a school altar piece with their own representations and symbols to make it more meaningful.

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

Standards in RE are broadly in line with national expectations for Year 2 and Year 6. Evidence from pupils' work shows they make expected progress compared to English and Maths but the school does not yet have an embedded system for assessing pupils in RE. Pupils acquire a secure subject knowledge which is based on an enquiry approach; this begins with a 'Big Question' that is explored by the pupils, providing opportunities for other questions to direct learning by the pupils -this was a focus from the last inspection and the process now being used ensures this has been achieved. Lessons are well planned with clear links to learning outcomes that identify what the pupils should be expected to achieve; they are often creative, linked to the school's values and have cross curricular references. One pupil said 'we learn about different peoples beliefs, we compare it to our own as Christians and we sometimes explore the difference through things like art'. One Yr5/6 lesson observed explored the beliefs of a Christian expressed through their art work – the children found this engaging and could bring real meaning to their learning when comparing it to themselves. The long term plan created for RE by the school and the diocesan RE advisor ensures a range of skills and knowledge are built up over time. One child spoke of 'learning about different religions and how we can compare and respond to beliefs in different ways'. A weaker area lies around the use of visits and visitors as a means both of enriching the curriculum and of providing a wider experience of diversity; this includes developing pupils' basic understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith. Assessment is neither sufficiently purposeful for teachers nor meaningful for pupils and as such the work produced does not do justice to the quality of what is experienced in lessons. The RE leader is committed to the subject and ensures that it has a high profile in the overall curriculum, ensuring the statutory entitlement is met.

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

Summarising the distinctly Christian values held by the headteacher and governors one parent said; 'the school opens my child's eyes to make choices in their life based on the Christian heritage it offers'. This has been developed by senior leaders since the last inspection; the Christian vision of the school is confidently articulated in the school brochure, documents on the website and face to face, stating the belief that in their Church of England primary school 'everybody matters, together effort achieves more'. This motto, with the core Christian values of respect, community, responsibility and tolerance, are central to school life. They have a high profile in RE and collective worship where each value is explored in more detail; responsibility was explored through the story of St Francis and children were able to link his life and beliefs to their own. Another example is the work the school has undertaken with other church schools such as the Lent Prayer Chain and 40 Acts of Generosity for Lent. Parents fully support the Christian values of the school, recognising the benefits to their children; one said 'every child is valued as an individual, the school is interested in them as a whole and they don't allow them to get lost but encourage them to be the best they can be'. This has ensured the children are resilient and feel supported in their daily lives and has helped secure good outcomes for all pupils for the last three years. Foundation governors have managed significant change since the last inspection. This has been effective because they adapt to challenges, are forward thinking and have strategically planned for the school's future. The current headteacher was identified and grown into her role from within the school; governors provided her with training, a mentor from a local church school and worked with the headteacher to develop the school's vision. Governors are a significant presence in the school, have a clear understanding of its effectiveness as a church school and regularly revisit the school's self-evaluation as a tool to improve, grounding their decisions in the Christian values they uphold. The school is embedded in its local community through many activities with St Bartholemew's such as the Community Day where the school cleaned the whole church. Other examples include working with other Christian groups to feed the homeless and support charity projects through non-uniform days. The incumbent has strong links through his fortnightly visit to school to lead worship, the regular festival services in church and his support in delivering RE. He recognised the strong Christian teachings that take place in the school and how these play out in pupils' lives, for example his recent visit to talk about the Holy Trinity and how he was seen as a father, brother and vicar –helping the children understand the three-in-one concept in a much more real way. He also works closely with the school to communicate to parents in weekly newsletters the collective worship themes and services the school leads on within the village community it serves.

SIAMS report October 2016 Brisley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Brisley, Norfolk NR20 5LH