

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

### Gooderstone CE VA Primary Academy

The Street, Gooderstone, Kings Lynn, PE33 9BP

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Norwich</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	1 March 2015
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	Churchside Federation, Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust
Date of inspection	13 March 2017
Date of last inspection	10 February 2009
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 141780
Executive headteacher	Christina Galletly
Inspector's name and number	Anna Reeder 659

#### School context

The school is a small rural primary school with 71 pupils on role organised in four mixed age classes. The school converted from a voluntary aided school to become a sponsored academy with the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) in March 2015. In September 2015, it federated with Mundford Church of England Primary Academy, also in DNEAT, to form the Churchside Federation. At this time, a new executive headteacher and head of school were appointed along with other three class teachers new to the school. Since 2008 the school has had six different head teachers. There has been a period of staffing turbulence in the past year.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Gooderstone Primary Academy as a Church of England school are good

- The school 's Christian values impact on the lives of the pupils and build a nurturing, supportive community that is harmonious and happy.
- The Christian foundation is understood and embraced by the school community creating a shared vision with improving outcomes for pupils.
- The school's leadership team knows the school well and has bought about effective actions to implement change.

#### Areas to improve

- Consolidate the existing good practice which is enabling accelerated progress for the majority so that strategies are embedded and high expectations are the norm.
- Broaden Governor monitoring and evaluation to focus on the distinctiveness of the school as a church school.
- Offer parents and the wider community opportunities to join the school in worship, and encourage them to become involved in giving feedback and evaluation.

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

The new leadership team revisited and revised its core Christian values and vision in their first term at the school, and involved all stakeholders in selecting the core values of honesty, respect and kindness which are underpinned by clear biblical references. The federation logo also clearly shows the close relationship between the school and the local church. A parent spoke about how her daughter wanted the church in the logo as she saw it as an extension of the school. These values are clearly visible in school and run throughout the curriculum, particularly in religious education [RE], where pupils have opportunities to explore the values and relate them to themselves. The pupils have embedded them in to their daily lives and can talk about them at length. "We are always trying to put them in our lives." They are all keen to be awarded a named brick for showing one of these values during the school day, which is added to a display of a values tree in the school entrance. They try to show these values in everything they do, and take pride in their school and acknowledge the excellent quality of relationships between staff and pupils. "We all look after each other." The school has a real inclusivity where the children all nurture one another. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoy escorting their nursery friends out to play. Parents talk about how their children have 'blossomed' from the care the school gives. "Rules are very clear, boundaries are respected and kindness and respect are lived out in the daily life of the school." Parents describe a no-blame culture where everyone is accepted, and appreciate how their children embrace and understand the mix of backgrounds and abilities that exist in the school. In the Autumn term the whole school had a focus on Africa which linked the school's harvest festival to supporting the charity Self Help Africa through a collection at church, a sponsored walk and cake sale. This enabled pupils to become more aware of cultural similarities and differences.

The leadership team inherited a legacy of low attainment and are clearly focussed on driving improvement across the school and accelerating progress for all pupils. Tracking systems have been put in place to identify those who are not making sufficient progress or have met other barriers to learning, and actions are taken swiftly to help move them on. This goes beyond the academic, and includes support to help pupils deal with emotional needs. Now new permanent members of staff are in place, the drive for improvement has accelerated and rates of progress are increasing across the school. Attendance and behaviour in school are good. Pupils benefit from a clear behaviour system 'good to be green' which links in closely with the development of their emotional literacy where they are encouraged to become self-regulating when they feel angry or upset in the long term. The pupils who struggle are supported to reflect on their actions and come up with strategies to help them in the future, reflecting the school's Christian understanding of forgiveness. Pupils understand that "a bad day does not mean a bad week" and that they get a fresh start and that "all emotions are acceptable, but all behaviours aren't." Consequently, behaviour is very good.

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

The executive headteacher plans worship into weekly themes over the school year. Worship is well structured and the theme for the week is explored in whole school worship, church worship and class worship. These themes are shared with parents and they appreciate this. Pupils visit St George's church, which is adjacent to the school, on a weekly basis for worship led by the incumbent. Parents are also welcome to attend. He is well known, approachable and a familiar face to the pupils who enjoy visiting church. During the service the pupils listen attentively and participate by answering questions. They understand that Jesus' disciples were a bit like apprentices who learned to help Jesus with his work, and that they can all be apprentices too.

Pupils plan and deliver school based worship with their class, and are responsible for acting out Bible stories, writing prayers, leading the Lord's Prayer and choosing hymns to sing. Worship follows a familiar structure whoever is leading it. This involves an entrance, a welcome, a story, reflection time, a prayer, a hymn and a parting thought, reflecting the pattern of Anglican worship. The pupils are familiar with liturgical greetings and responses. They attend church for special services at harvest, Christmas, Easter and at the end of the school, year. Pupils pray at lunchtime and when they go home at the end of the day and they see this as an opportunity to talk to God. Each class has a reflective area where pupils say they can go to think and calm down and contribute reflections on the worship theme if they want to. Pupils enjoy acting in worship, and say worship is "always fun to watch and there is always something new to learn." They like "looking back at what has been spoken about and thinking and learning from it." Worship is an important part of the school day for many pupils where they have time to think about important things. Most have some understanding of the Trinity. A pupil explained that the Trinity "represents God the Father, the Holy Spirit and the Son," and said that they had learnt about this in lessons and worship.

Parents described the Christmas nativity in church as "very special" as the whole school was involved with everyone helping one other. They are appreciative of worship and would like the opportunity to visit worship in the school as well. Parents feel that worship gives their children "a good grounding and a broad knowledge base about faith and

Christianity". They see a positive reciprocal relationship between the church and the school community such as a recent McMillan coffee morning where they joined together to support the charity.

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

The federation's experienced subject leader retired at the end of the last term, and the head of school has taken over the role until a new federation subject leader is appointed in September. The school has engaged with the Understanding Christianity project; a long-term curriculum map is already in place and the new resources are in use across the school. Early indications are that these have brought about an increase in depth of pupil responses to big philosophical questions. This enquiry approach to the teaching of religious education [RE] has been met with a positive response from pupils, parents and teachers alike. Parents appreciate that children learn about other religions which leads to philosophical questions being asked at home. The school shares the 'big question' approach with parents, and a parent spoke about her child asking questions at home such as "Did God make things?" and "Where did we come from?" School encourages families to spend time together talking about a big question each term such as 'Why do we make promises?' Another child was listening to music at home and said that it was making her think about God. Parents see their children making links between what they have been learning about with their home life. They even sing favourite hymns when they are playing outside!

The head of school has worked with diocesan colleagues on an Early Years project 'Firm Foundations' which has enabled high quality teaching for the youngest pupils. Pupils are taught well and are active learners, and lessons are not passive. The resources are inspiring. The nursery and reception pupils had been learning about Noah's Ark, and the outside area was full of learning opportunities linked to this. Years 3 and 4 were brainstorming what symbols represented Christianity. Their responses were varied and thoughtful ranging from drawings of bread and wine to represent communion and the last supper, a cross because it reminded them that Jesus died on a cross on Good Friday to sandals "because Jesus wore them and it would have been too hot there to wear wellies". Years 1 and 2 had been outside acting out Palm Sunday with giant paper palm leaves and thinking about what sort of things the crowds might be saying to Jesus as he passed. They were all able to recount the key events and think about the feelings of those involved. "God would have felt proud of Jesus when he rode into Jerusalem. The crowd would have said 'Jesus we love you!' and 'The holy spirit is near!'" Assessment has been put in place across the federation linked to this new curriculum approach for the units that have been taught so far, and the leadership team have been involved in monitoring and evaluation activities. The pupils' RE work shows good progress, particularly in key stage one and the early years, and is in line with national expectations and is on a par with attainment in core subjects.

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

The school's leadership team is clear that its Christian values and ethos underpin all that goes on in school, and that it is well led as a church school. A clear Christian vision and values statement has been put in place that is owned by the pupils and staff who live it out each day. The way staff and pupils treat each other is testament to the impact of the core Christian values of kindness, honesty and respect and on the emotional, spiritual and moral development of pupils. The Christian vision is shared by all members of the school community, including parents who speak warmly of the difference it makes to their children's lives. They describe the 'family' environment in which they feel encouraged to contribute to school life.

The school's leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and they have demonstrated the capacity to bring about rapid improvements, taking swift action to bring about change in a relatively short space of time. The chair of governors appreciates that the school leadership team has had to focus on key issues such as becoming an academy, federating, and building a stable staff base. They are confident that the school ethos continues to be strong and governors played a part in developing the vision statement of 'let every light shine' but acknowledge that monitoring the church school distinctiveness has not been a recent priority. Areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed although most progress has been made since the appointment of the current leadership team and therefore evidence of impact is relatively limited.

The school works effectively with its key stakeholders such as parents, the diocese and the local church, and its federation partner to bring about change that is resulting in improved rates of progress. Professional development is tailored to staff needs as well as whole-school issues. This promotes teachers' skills and knowledge which in turn enhances pupils' progress. The school's single change plan includes areas for development identified in the school's church school self-evaluation, and progress has been made in all key areas. Statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education are met.