



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Mundford Church of England Primary Academy

St Leonard's Street
Mundford
Norfolk
IP26 5ED

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 9 December 2015

Date of last inspection: 8 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 121047

Headteacher: Christina Galletly

Inspector's name and number: Stephen Green 809

School context

The school converted to an academy in December 2014, as part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, and federated with Gooderstone Academy in September 2015. The executive headteacher has been in post since September 2015, although she has been headteacher of Mundford since 2011. There is currently no incumbent. There are 167 pupils on role, with many coming from a very rural background. Numbers with special educational needs, English as an additional language, or from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are broadly average. Staffing is stable and the school buildings and grounds are well maintained.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mundford Academy as a Church of England academy are good

- Very strong relationships exist between parents, pupils and the school.
- The school has strong links with the local community and other local schools.
- The school is benefitting from significant and valued advice from both the Diocese of Norwich and the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.
- There has been a sustained and significant improvement in pupil progress and attainment in most areas of the school since the last (2010) SIAS inspection.

Areas to improve

- To improve links with the local Anglican Church during the interregnum, and to rebuild a mutually supportive relationship after an appointment has been made.
- To develop parents and pupils' ownership of collective worship (CW) by providing more opportunities for them to share CW and to offer feedback.
- To develop pupils' understanding and respect for those of other faiths by increasing opportunities for representatives of different faiths to speak to pupils.
- To improve opportunities for both pupils and staff by developing links and contacts within their federation and Academies trust.

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

Christian distinctiveness is made obvious to visitors in the entrance and corridors, in individual classrooms, and in the website and communications with parents. The school has impressive grounds in the heart of Thetford Forest, and makes full use of the Forest Schools scheme and its nature area to encourage pupils to sit quietly and reflect upon the beauty of the world they live in. All classrooms have their own focus areas, which are used when worship is held there. School leaders have recently reviewed its Christian values with pupils, staff and parents. As a result of this three values have been chosen to be at the core of school life, these being kindness, honesty and respect. Other Christian values (chiefly drawn from Values for Life and SEAL) are incorporated into these. The school uses collective worship (CW) and religious education (RE) to explore the theological basis of each value, looking at both Jesus' life and teachings and the wider Bible. Both teaching and non-teaching staff constantly reinforce these values with pupils. One teacher spoke about discussing honesty with his pupils with regard to sitting tests, and mid-day supervisors use behaviour report cards on which the three core Christian values are clearly printed. The values are shared with parents on the website and in the prospectus and regular newsletters, and are displayed in most areas of the school. The impact of these values upon relationships and the lives of pupils is considerable, and was praised by both parents and governors. Attendance is good (95.8% in 2014-15) and there are a range of extra-curricular activities, including a very well-supported Search and Rescue club where parents help the staff to explore Bible stories in greater depth. Currently almost 25% of pupils choose to stay behind after school to attend this. Pupils have the opportunity to write their own prayers and add them to a prayer tree in the entrance, and regularly say the Lord's Prayer together. The school's chosen Christian values, and its Christian character are making a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. An example of this would be the work pupils have done for charity (relating to their chosen value of kindness), something which the pupils themselves are very proud of. Behaviour is usually good, and school leaders are keen to ensure that when inappropriate behaviour occurs it is challenged in a way that relates it to their values (kindness, honesty and respect). Ofsted (2014) stated that 'pupils have a good understanding of the various forms of bullying and were adamant that it happens rarely.' This inspection would support that. School leaders are keen to ensure that other Christian values (e.g. forgiveness) are also seen to be relevant, so that the three Christian values at the core of the school's ethos are not seen as being exhaustive. Parents spoke of their considerable support for the school and its leaders. They praised 'how well the children are nurtured' and one stated that she knew of other parents who specifically brought their children to the school because of this. Another said that 'as a parent I like the compassion shown by the staff'. Ofsted stated that 'parents, pupils and staff rightly feel that the school is a safe and caring place and comments made during this inspection echoed this.

The impact of collective worship on the academy community is good

Most worship takes place in the hall, when a mobile focus is brought out. However, there are few other signs that the hall is a central place for collective worship (e.g. by the provision of inspirational displays or the school's Christian aims or logo). Worship is led by a broad range of people including school staff and representatives of other Christian denominations. The school expects to involve local Anglican clergy in leading worship when they have been appointed, although this has not been the case in the recent past. Until a new appointment can be made, school leaders have made greater use of the cathedral and the leaders of other local churches. Older pupils have a worship group which plans and leads worship on a termly basis. They plan and lead acts of collective worship under the supervision of the CW co-ordinator and follow a proforma which is given to all leaders to ensure that all the key elements of worship are included, including music, prayer and time for personal reflection. The programme of CW is based upon material from Values for Life and SEAL and is used as the main vehicle for developing the school's Christian values and ethos. There are regular acts of worship in classes

which allow teachers and pupils to develop their own responses in greater detail, and at a more age-appropriate level. Governors monitor CW and RE regularly, and their feedback is kept and used to inform future planning. Parents said that they fully support the school's worship, although because they have had limited opportunities to share CW they are not as informed as they could be. The school recognises this and intends to provide them with formal monitoring opportunities in the future. Parents spoke of the impact the school's Christian ethos and values have upon pupils' lives outside school, and how they have recognised pupils' developing spirituality. There is a strong focus upon Biblical material and the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, although pupils' understanding of the Holy Trinity is limited. Pupils were seen to enjoy CW, especially when given the opportunity to take leading roles themselves. The school is isolated by the village's location, but nevertheless some opportunities have been developed to provide pupils with an understanding of other faiths and Christian denominations, and to increase their respect for those who do not share their faith. However such opportunities are at the moment limited.

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

The school is part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, and a federation with another church academy. School leaders entered into both of these with the stated aim of being better able to preserve and develop the school's Christian status. They have since also been able to demonstrate their ethos of Christian service by supporting colleagues and pupils in their partner school when it has been necessary. This is a good example of school leaders living out as well as promoting the school's Christian values (in this case kindness). Pupil achievement is at least in line with national expectations and in some cases higher. Vulnerable groups perform at least as well as their peers in other schools and in some cases better. This demonstrates a significant improvement from previous years, and reflects the sound understanding that school leaders have of pupils' performance and their ability to target interventions. Leaders also have a good understanding of the school's Christian distinctiveness and have worked hard to develop this with all groups in the school community. Senior staff have been developed as future leaders of church schools in many ways, including training from the diocese, and the opportunity to lead across both schools in the federation. Governors are well informed as a result of regular and targeted monitoring, and have good relationships with both staff and parents. There has not been a close relationship between the school and the village's Anglican Church in recent years and there has been no incumbent since May 2015. The incumbent has not had a significant role either working with pupils or in the leadership and management of the school. School leaders are keen to ensure that when a new appointment is made they will be given every opportunity to do so. During this time the diocese has taken an active role, and the school has managed to involve leaders from the United Reformed Church and the local Baptist community to temporarily fulfil many of the roles that local clergy might have been expected to have taken. Pupils visit the local church at least every term, and the number of parents who share worship when they do has risen dramatically. However, they do not yet visit sufficiently frequently to give the pupils a thorough knowledge of their church and the traditions associated with it. Although they are encouraged to join the school when they worship in the church, parents do not have many opportunities to share worship with pupils in school. Parents and pupils have few opportunities to monitor and give feedback about worship they take part in. The school has a good approach to tackling all types of bullying, and uses Biblical references to explain to children why bullying is wrong and will not be tolerated. School leaders are keen to be seen as accessible, and one parent stated that parents really value this. 'Parents are not kept at arm's length', she said, 'and this has brought families in'. Both RE and CW meet statutory requirements. Parents have been asked to express their opinions on several issues, including which Christian values should be at the heart of the school.