

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

<b>Swineshead St. Mary's Church of England Primary School</b>	
Abbey Road Swineshead Boston Lincolnshire PE20 3EN	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lincoln</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Name of federation	The Emmaus Federation
Date of inspection	24 November 2016
Date of last inspection	17 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled I20558
Executive Headteacher	Claire Collett
Inspector's name and number	Fiona Griffiths 705

### School context

St. Mary's is part of the Emmaus Federation with one other church school and shares a governing body. It is an average size primary school with 262 children on roll. Children come from the surrounding area and are mainly of White British heritage. They come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The number of children entitled to receive the pupil premium is below the national figure. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages. The school has experienced significant changes to staffing since the last inspection. The executive headteacher was appointed in April 2015 and the head of school in April 2016.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are good

- Explicit Christian values have become more firmly established throughout the school community and impact on the quality of relationships and children's attitudes towards learning.
- Acts of worship are an important time in the school day where an inclusive sense of belonging creates a community that worships and prays together. They make a significant contribution to the children's growing spiritual development.
- The commitment of leaders and managers to the Christian ethos means that it is continually developing to have meaning and purpose for all members of the school community. They have ensured that it has made good progress since the previous inspection.

### Areas to improve

- Create opportunities within the curriculum for children to engage in questioning and critical thinking to support their exploration of matters of faith and belief across global Christian communities.
- Provide high quality opportunities for children to plan, deliver and evaluate acts of collective worship so that they feel empowered to express their own spirituality.
- Develop the skills and abilities of leaders and managers, including governors, to gather high quality evidence of the impact of the Christian ethos and use that to identify further challenging areas for improvement.

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

The Christian ethos of the school ensures that a common vision brings the school community together through a shared understanding of how Christian values contribute to the children's personal development and progress in their learning. Five core values are firmly established as the central expression of the school's Christian ethos. Forgiveness, respect, compassion, inclusion and love are well known to children and adults in school and are promoted through collective worship, moral and social development and the way the school manages behaviour. Children and adults throughout the school are developing their understanding of these core values and how they make a difference to their lives. Dynamic displays in the front entrance of the school and the hall reflect how Christian teaching underpins the meaning of these values and are presented in a visual way to further support the children's growing understanding of them. Children have a particularly good appreciation of the three values of forgiveness, respect and love and how they are linked to Bible stories which help them to learn about Jesus and what He taught us. Children grasp how these apply to their own lives in school and outside of it. They make a significant contribution to the children's positive attitudes towards learning and the enthusiasm in which they engage with their work. These have contributed to the recent successful improvements made to raise the quality of the children's education and the standards they achieve. Children are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas with confidence knowing that they will be listened to with respect. They say that they feel happy and safe in school and that adults look after them and help them to do well in their learning. One child commented 'we can trust our teachers'. The 'Growing Acorns' club is an example of the Christian care which is offered by staff to those more vulnerable pupils. Adults treat children with kindness and consideration based on modelling the core values and children respond likewise and with a respect for each other. Children have good opportunities to reflect using the class reflection areas. They respond well when they are given the time to think about difficult concepts. A member of the school council commented that, 'you can share your ideas with other people and nobody will get mad at you for your opinion'. Religious education also makes an important contribution to the development of moral and social development through opportunities to discuss issues based on faiths and belief where they will challenge one another's views but also learn from them. These opportunities however do not as yet challenge children to explore global Christian practices. Cultural appreciation is also fostered by the study of world faiths in RE where they learn to respect others.

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

Acts of collective worship are outstanding because carefully delivered messages are easily accessible to children who consequently relate well to them because they have relevance to their own lives. They are distinctively Christian and fully inclusive and at the same time interactive and fun. Children talk about times when these messages have changed the way they think about someone or something. A member of the school council explained how 'we look after children at playtime who have hurt themselves because Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan and it doesn't matter who it is who needs help, you should still help them'. Planning for adult led worship has a thorough structure which places values firmly at the centre of themes rooted in Bible stories. Children say that they learn about God and Jesus which helps them to be better people. They have positive attitudes to worship and are keen to participate and willingly volunteer. Themes relate directly to the children's learning and personal needs and make a substantial difference to both. They respond well to questions in worship and are respectful when they pray and sing with enthusiasm. Children have been involved in providing feedback about worship and their views inform the planning of future worships. They have some opportunities to deliver worship themes but planning, delivery and evaluation of their own worship has not yet been fully explored. The 'Little FISH' Team (Faith In Small Hearts), a group of children from within the school, promote the Christian values in worship time. Children regard the celebration of festivals such as Harvest, Easter and Christmas at the local church as part of the life of the school spirituality. Parents spoke passionately about the celebration of 'Unity in the Community' which incorporated different faiths from around the world and the increased knowledge and understanding this brought to the whole school community. Acts of worship are explicitly Anglican in character with opening words and special prayers to say thank you and sorry. Children understand that the use of a candle to start worship shows that it is a special time and that the flame represents Jesus as being the light of the world. They are respectful of worship and show a reverence and quiet when praying and reflecting. Worship at St. Mary's continues to be outstanding because it is supported each week by members of the church community and is a time for joyous celebration of the children's spirituality.

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

The executive headteacher has ensured that the school has developed a more overt Christian character since the previous inspection. Members of the school community are more aware that the school has a vision rooted in Christian teaching and that this has a positive impact on children's attitudes to learning and their approach to

relationships. The teaching of explicit Christian values is developing a shared understanding of spirituality. Members of staff show great passion for their duties and the focus on raising standards, which are improving, has not stopped the development of the school as a church school. The executive headteacher and senior leaders have a clear grasp of what needs to be done to continue developing the distinctive Christian ethos and have the full support of the governing body to do so. Self-evaluation is realistic and shows a good capacity to continue to improve as a church school. The school has benefited from clear advice from the diocese which has helped to evaluate their performance as a church school and given appropriate challenge. Since the previous inspection, parents have become more engaged in whole school policy and practice. They particularly remark that the school is now 'much better at seeking our views'. Parents support the school's ethos because they feel that it encourages children to explore what faith means to them in a natural way. The RE leader ensures that the subject has a high profile in the school and is delivered in an exciting way. She has a good understanding of developments in RE and is clear how to take the subject forward. Staff receive up to date training and are currently engaged in implementing the 'Understanding Christianity' project, exploring teaching Christianity at a greater depth. Governors take seriously their role in appointing senior leaders who support the church school ethos. Governors monitor RE and worship to identify further areas for improvement and understand the need to develop their skills and abilities in continuing to challenge the school as a church school. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the overall impact of the Christian ethos on all aspects of school life are in place. The vicar makes an important contribution to the life of the school and is a familiar member of the school community. He regularly leads acts of worship and welcomes children to the church to celebrate services such as Christmas and Easter. Children, parents and staff all comment on the enjoyment and enthusiasm he brings to worship. The commitment of the 'Open the Book' team, comprising of members of the church, to worship each week strengthens the children's knowledge of Bible stories. Parents say that their children come home and talk about Bible stories and link them to their school values. The school's Christian ethos has supported the school through some hard times. The school is at a place where children and adults are excited about the possibilities for their next stage of development.

The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report November 2016 Swineshead St. Mary's CE Primary School Boston Lincolnshire PE20 3EN