



**RC DIOCESE OF
EAST ANGLIA**



**The Church of England
Diocese of Ely**

All Saints Academy

County Road
March
PE15 8ND

Previous SIAMS/Section 48 grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

**Diocese of Ely (Church of England) and
Diocese of East Anglia (Roman Catholic)**

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 7 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 22 June 2011

School's unique reference number: 139537

Headteacher: Mark Millinson

Inspector's name and number: Jan Southgate, Stephen Green 809

School context

The school is situated in the small town of March and has 222 pupils on role. Pupils come from a normal range of social backgrounds, and the proportion with English as a second language reflects the national norm. The school is full and numbers are stable. The headteacher has been in post for two years. There are close links with the local Anglican church, St John's, and the Roman Catholic church of Our Lady of Good Counsel. It became an academy in 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints as an inter-church academy are good

- School leaders lead the school with clear and consistent vision and commitment.
- A wide variety of clergy from different backgrounds make frequent and valued contributions to collective worship (CW), religious education (RE), and the school ethos. As a result pupils are knowledgeable about the similarities and differences between the Anglican and Roman Catholic church, and are comfortable in either church setting.
- Pupils respond well to high-quality teaching and to the varied, stimulating opportunities provided within their RE lessons. Their positive attitudes and excellent behaviour are reflections of the Christian values and ethos of the school.

Areas to improve

- To review how the school's values are explicitly identified to further impact on the Christian life of the school.
- To involve governors in monitoring and evaluating worship, in order to better inform school leaders about which approaches are being most effective.
- To give pupils meaningful roles in the planning, leading and monitoring of worship, in order to increase their ownership of it.
- To ensure all pupils' attainment and progress in RE is regularly monitored and assessed, with the procedure embedded throughout the whole school.

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

The Christian foundation of the school is very obvious through its website, communications with parents and displays around the school. The Christian character has a very high profile and makes a significant impact upon pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. School leaders and teachers work hard to ensure that pupils' behaviour is of a very high standard. The pupils and parents spoken to said that pupils respect each other and feel valued; consequently bullying is very unusual. If it did occur, they were confident that it would be dealt with effectively. Parents commented that they ascribe this to the excellent relationships pupils see between all staff members and the quality of the headteacher's personal interventions and commitment. One parent spoke of the considerable support he had given to her whole family and her children at a particularly difficult time, saying that this demonstrated both the Christian vision and commitment of school leaders, and their belief in being there to support the whole family when needed. "The school," she said, "is a forgiving place, where parents are encouraged to knock on the headteacher's door whenever they feel they need to." Pupils have a very good understanding of their faith as a multi-cultural world religion, and examples were seen of the school's work supporting agencies in the third world, as well as charitable work closer to home helping flood victims in Northern England. The academy takes its status as an interchurch academy very seriously, and clergy from both the Anglican church and the Roman Catholic church are regularly involved in the life of the school. Pupils attend termly worship in the local churches, and clergy support staff in teaching pupils about both Anglican and Roman Catholic practice, and the similarities and key differences between the two. Parents, clergy and governors were asked whether they thought the balance between the two churches was appropriate, and agreed that it is, and that the children are benefitting from being closely connected to both. There are links with the local prison, and the chaplain is a regular and popular visitor to the school to lead worship. Whilst the school has a set of values which are determined in a Christian way, to improve the pupils' depth of knowledge and understanding of these values, the school needs to determine which distinctively Christian values will be targeted in order to achieve this. Pupils demonstrate well-developed individual spirituality, and prayer forms a key part of their day. Pupils were seen to have a good level of individual spirituality, which leaders expect to be boosted further by plans the school has to turn the library into a chapel. Opportunities to develop personal spirituality through encouraging greater pupil participation in the planning, leading and monitoring of collective worship are underdeveloped.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship takes place daily as a whole school, or within the classrooms. Pupils respond reverently, enthusiastically, and with ease. The RE leader plans termly themes, liturgies, Masses and Eucharistic services which involve the local clergy coming in regularly to lead worship. The RE leader also works closely with the Church Liaison Committee who organize collective worship events for staff and pupils. Collective worship impacts on pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, evidenced by the calm, caring and positive behaviour and attitudes seen throughout the school. During the collective worship observed, the prison chaplain (who comes in to school regularly) shared the theme of "putting others first", linked it to the Good Samaritan story, and gave many opportunities for pupils to reflect on and answer questions. They clearly enjoyed this form of participation. The children sang the hymns with enthusiasm using sign language, and when randomly chosen, pupils stood up and spontaneously offered prayers linked to the theme of putting others first. In a meeting with a group of pupils from across the key stages, they described how pupils support each other. Pupils gain a good understanding of gospel values and have a sound knowledge of bible stories which they enjoy enacting. In relation to understanding the two faith traditions of the school, a pupil was able to explain the differences within the Eucharist whereby "one is symbolic of Jesus' presence and the other believes it to be the actual presence of Jesus." One pupil then explained that "God loves each one of us equally." Within classrooms, prayer tables are a key focus, and all are well resourced and offer opportunities for personal and collective prayer. There are opportunities for personal prayers to be shared within RE lessons and pupils listen attentively and supportively. Pupils take part in collective worship during the term, and there is a strong emphasis on participating. In order to make collective worship outstanding, pupils need to have more opportunities to be involved in the organisation, planning, delivery and evaluation of the impact of their presentations. Governors, occasionally observe collective worship and produce a monitoring report, but this practice, (identified within the last inspection as an area for development), is not yet sufficiently embedded in the good practice of regularly shared outcomes.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils respond enthusiastically to the high-quality teaching which impacts on pupils' learning. Class observations and workbook scrutiny indicate that pupils gain a good understanding of, and use accurately, religious vocabulary linked to the two Christian faiths. Pupils achieve age appropriate RE levels of attainment. Within the curriculum, which draws on themes from the East Anglian diocesan RE plan, there are also termly planned opportunities to learn about other faiths. At least 10% of curriculum time is used for RE and the yearly action plan together with an acceptable budget allocation, supports the effectiveness of RE. Classrooms are generally well resourced, including ICT resources to support learning. The use of religious artefacts supports and motivates pupils' learning. In all lessons observed, teaching strategies were imaginative, at a good pace, with a range of short activities which stimulated and built on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils work in groups, pairs, or individually, and tasks are effectively differentiated to match pupils' needs. Pupils talk about their RE with ease and understanding and appropriately enquire or question aspects within lessons. During the inspection, a Buddhist nun shared with the year 5/6 class strategies to support meditation, which the pupils responded to reverently. In all classes the curriculum contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through opportunities for prayer and pupils responding to group or individual presentations. Pupils enjoy preparing mime and plays based on the bible stories which they then learn to present within collective worship. Colourful and informative displays throughout the school include working walls for pupils to add ideas or prayers, often linked to the current themes being studied or to charity work which the school is involved in. The RE leader and the link governor support staff well and organise work scrutinies, discussions of strategies and outcomes of learning. Pupil friendly "I can" targets linked to levels of attainment are used to measure attainment and progress. This is not yet outstanding because it is currently insufficiently consistent across all year groups. Marking of pupils' work highlights pupils' achievements. Opportunities for pupils to self-evaluate their written work needs further development and next step targets identified to aid further progress.

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

School leaders have a very clear Christian vision and a strong commitment to the children in their care. They work hard to support all members of the school community, and to drive the academy forward. School leaders' efforts have a noticeable impact on this and are recognised and appreciated by both parents and pupils. Attendance was 96.5% at the time of inspection, and rising, and there have been no exclusions since the present headteacher joined the school. Academic performances are generally higher than in similar schools, and are improving. Leaders have an accurate understanding of pupil performance based upon monitoring of work, lesson observations and effective and accurate self-evaluation. There is much evidence to demonstrate the support the school is receiving from the clergy of both churches, both in terms of developing Christian leadership and in developing understanding of Christianity in learners. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the similarities between the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, as well as some of the key differences between them. The school is very successfully moulding the pupils into one body, and although school leaders have analysed the religious backgrounds of their staff and pupils, pupils generally see themselves as all belonging to one Christian family. One parent spoke in glowing terms about the way the school is developing, saying that it now recognises both churches and keeps a fair balance between them. They spoke of the school staff as being "fair and approachable," "polite and friendly," and said how "proud we all are of our school." They felt school leaders were well-informed about their school, but said parents were not regularly asked to provide their opinions. Governors communicate regularly with parents and are regular visitors to the school. However, governors' formal monitoring of the school ethos and collective worship, which was a focus for improvement from the last inspection, is still not sufficiently robust to be effective and useful for all school leaders. The Senior Leadership Team work closely with representatives of both churches to ensure that both are equally represented in school, and pupils have equal access to both churches. One member of the local clergy stated that "all churches in March work together closely, and the school is a developing part of that ecumenical process." A good example is the service held at the start of every year to welcome all teachers to the town's schools. CW, RE and the wider school curriculum are based upon Christian values, but the school recognises that these values are presently at an implicit rather than an explicit level.