THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

The Methodist Church

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The St Sebastian's Church of England Primary School Great Gonerby				
Address	High Street, Great Gonerby, Grantham, Lincolnshire. NG31 8LB			
Date of inspection	7 November 2019	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary Grantham Villages' Church Schools Federation	
Diocese	**Lincoln**		URN	120601

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	**Grade**	**Excellent**
Additional Judgements	**The impact of collective worship**	**Grade**	**Excellent**
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	**Grade**	**Good**

School context

St. Sebastian's is a primary school with 151 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school is in the process of becoming a federation with another Church school. This will have one governing body and headteacher.

The school's Christian vision

Together in Faith we aspire to achieve excellence
'Encourage one another and build each other up.' (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
An inclusive Christian community with hope for all, we work towards opening minds, widening horizons and unlocking potential.

Key findings

- The steadfast commitment to the Christian vision ensures the school is highly skilled at responding to the additional needs of all pupils so that they achieve their potential and shine.
- The exceptional dedication of the headteacher and staff to the vision of excellence has resulted in significantly rising attainment across all subjects and rapidly improving rates of progress.
- Highly effective leadership of religious education (RE) results in high quality teaching. RE greatly enhances other aspects of the curriculum, promoting a deep understanding of diversity and respect.
- The school's unrelenting drive to unlock potential has resulted in the new hard federation. The deep commitment to building each other up is already showing impressive results for both schools. However, due to the newness of federation, not all members of the inaugural governing body are yet trained to use the SIAMS framework to steer their work.
- Inspiring and inclusive collective worship significantly builds up this Anglican school community in hope and aspiration. Through collective worship the whole school community is profoundly shaped by its Christian vision and values to make the world a better place.

Areas for development

- Utilising diocese wide expertise, regularly train all federation governors to use the SIAMS schedule to steer developments as a church school and so they fully understand its seven strands.
- Apply the same rigour and approach used to study Christianity to the further faith traditions studied.

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How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The school's distinctive Christian vision reflects St Sebastian's context exceedingly well. This community focussed school is, therefore, foremost in serving the common good. The exceptional commitment of the headteacher and the whole school to 'encouraging one another and building each other up,' results in a steadfast concern to serve those with additional needs. The school does all it possibly can to reduce barriers to successful learning for all. It invests heavily in time, emotion and resources to ensuring all pupils aspire to and achieve excellence in their own ways and sparkle with rightful pride.

Through careful monitoring and evaluation, dedicated school leaders are most effective in bringing about improvements, including those required of the last inspection. The school has rapidly improved in recent years due to the building up of staff expertise and consistent pupil expectations, resulting in accelerating attainment. This is now above national averages. Rates of pupil progress are also rising. The school's Christian values of friendship, forgiveness, aspiration, perseverance, creativity, courage and truthfulness are key to this progress. The values are clearly grounded in the Christian theology behind the vision of building everyone up as a child of God. This sets the right foundations for effective learning and pupil development.

Teachers develop rich experiences for pupils to explore their personal spirituality. Pupils have ample opportunities to flourish, significantly extending their talents and interests. The language of the school's Christian vision and values gives everyone a vocabulary to explore spirituality effectively. However, the school does not always fully explain its understanding of spiritual development to pupils and parents. The creative curriculum is purposely woven with spiritual, moral and cultural gifts. It allows pupils to explore themselves and their world by navigating the big questions of life. Consequently, pupils are inspired by staff to be the best they can be, achieving together and expanding their possibilities.

Proactive school leaders are wholly committed to the Christian vision of widening horizons and releasing potential. This commitment means leaders purposely look beyond the school. The establishment of the formal federation to promote the flourishing of pupils and staff on a wider scale is one result. The school's highly effective practice as a centre of excellence is helping pupils in this school and beyond to transform their lives. However, governors for the new federation are not yet trained to use the SIAMS schedule in a rigorous way to drive future improvements. The school mutually benefits from strategic links with Kyra teaching school and Grace Church Schools network for support and challenge. Consequently, the school is at the forefront of new thinking and innovative practice. Relationships are strong with the local church and parents who rightly praise the hugely positive impact upon community cohesion this school has.

The whole school faithfully lives out its distinctive Christian vision in positive relationships, encouraging each other. Behaviour at the school is exemplary and rooted in Christian values of forgiveness and friendship. The school supports the mental health of both pupils and adults extremely well. The use of Christian mindfulness techniques, art and sport activities contributes to stress reduction and provides valuable coping skills for when life is difficult. The school's anti-bullying and safeguarding practices are proactive and highly effective. They are a shining example of the Church of England's guidance on best practice, 'Valuing All God's Children'. Each person is treated with dignity, care and respect. Leaders prioritise pupil and staff wellbeing ensuring pastoral care is outstanding. This is clearly evident in the way everyone enfolds members of the school with compassion and support in periods of grief, for example. Families from a range of backgrounds and faiths readily turn to the school when support is needed. The distinctive needs of forces families are very well considered with insightful support resulting. The immensely dedicated staff go the 'extra mile' to ensure each pupil is cherished as an individual child of God.

The school's inclusive Christian vision invites and inspires the whole school community to engage in social action locally, nationally and globally. The varied work undertaken as eco-warriors, mini police or faith

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council, where pupils are actively seeking to make a difference, exemplifies this. The 'To Kenya with Love' work enables pupils to think globally and to consider ways to challenge poverty, injustice and inequality. The way pupils passionately advocate for change during work on the Grantham foodbank and in supporting Samaritans Purse is impressive. It clearly shows the impact of the vision.

Inspirational, inclusive collective worship is widely seen as the 'beating heart' of the school, generating for everyone an invitation to encounter 'living faith'. Pupils and adults speak with enthusiasm about how worship significantly influences their lives, both in and out of school. Profoundly shaped by the school's vision and values during collective worship, pupils and staff alike are passionate about making the world a better place. They see prayer as positively impacting the world and engage in it in a variety of thoughtful ways. Pupils interact positively with a range of biblical accounts. This is helping them greatly to apply scriptural perspectives to decision making. Visits from motivational speakers, such as paralympians, significantly builds a sense of hope and aspiration, encouraging all to aspire to excellence. Pupils fully appreciate the place faith can play in realising hopes and aspirations. The attitude of pupils to collective worship is excellent because high quality worship greatly enhances their spiritual development. Regular worship at St Sebastian's Church and frequent visits by local clergy grounds worship clearly within the Anglican tradition and its spiritual practices and rhythms. Through leading collective worship pupils and staff are built up spiritually through experiences of inspiring music, Anglican traditions, prayer, stillness and reflection. Inspired by the vision, worship is transformational creating a joyful community built on the best possible experiences for personal growth.

Religious Education reflects the Christian vision of the school exceptionally well. This is because RE has a high profile and impacts the wider curriculum. The subject is well led. The enthusiastic coordinator is actively involved in developing RE with the federation and Grace network schools. This expertise results in high quality RE provision. Pupils have significant opportunities to engage with a range of religions and worldviews. The Understanding Christianity resource has raised standards significantly in the last year, including concepts and vocabulary. However, the same approach is yet to be developed in the study of further faith traditions. RE exposes pupils to a range of cultures opening their minds to the beauty of diversity and developing a deep respect for all.

As one of its schools, St. Sebastian's is significantly extending the mission of the Diocese of Lincoln. It is a real treasure.

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The effectiveness of RE is Good

Pupils' responses to RE are immensely positive because lessons are most engaging and inclusive. The quality of teaching and learning in RE is consistently good, utilising a variety of learning tasks. School leaders and governors ensure that standards are high through accurate monitoring systems that lead to improvements. Robust assessment is used to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, regardless of their starting points, all pupils make rapid and sustained progress in RE.

Headteacher	Michelle Waddell
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598

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