



The Norman CE Primary School (An Academy Member of DEMAT)

School Lane,
Norfolk
IP26 5BN

Northwold,

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 18 June 2015

Date of last inspection: 6 July 2010

School's unique reference number: 121122

Headteacher: Carole Reich

Inspector's name and number: Jean Johnson 608

School context

The Norman is a smaller than average sized primary school with 84 pupils on roll. Pupils come from Northwold and the surrounding villages and are predominantly of White British heritage. The school converted to academy status in July 2014 when it became a member of the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT). The current head teacher has joined the school since the last inspection. The school is within walking distance of the village church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Norman as a Church of England school are good

- The strong Christian ethos of this 'family' school, exemplified in the school's vision statement, supports all learners, promotes good relationships and ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the school and its future sustainability within a Christian context.
- Pupils gain a good understanding of Christianity and other faiths through high quality experiences in religious education (RE)
- Strong and effective links between the school and the local Church community promote the school's Christian character and ethos.
- Worship is varied and engaging and has a positive impact on behaviour and attitudes.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that monitoring of RE and collective worship by all stake holders is evaluative and leads to further improvements to the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- Establish a consistent system of assessment for RE and ensure that information is used to inform future planning and provide appropriate challenge for all pupils.
- Evaluate the impact of collective worship by regularly gathering pupils' views. Use the information gained to plan further improvements to the effectiveness of collective worship.

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

'Jesus is our guide' is at the heart of the school's vision statement which is displayed in words and pictures throughout the school and on the school website. Pupils' behaviour is good, they try to do their best and have a strong sense of caring for each other. When they have difficult choices to make, they ask themselves, 'What would Jesus do?' They say that this helps them to make the 'right choice' for both themselves and others. Pupils of all ages come together in 'family groups' and support each other for events and at different times in the school day. They value these opportunities to work together, and take responsibility for others in a mixed age group. The inclusive friendly relationships within the school are clearly informed by the vision and the explicit Christian values that stem from it. Parents say that their children are looked after well and seen as individuals. The school's nurturing, family ethos ensures that all pupils are valued as individuals and, as a result, make at least expected and often good progress during their time at the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is closely tracked and has a high profile within the school. Pupils demonstrate their care and concern for others when they raise money for charities and help out in the local community. They show awareness and stewardship of God's creation through their involvement in Forest Schools and the initiatives taken by the Eco Council. Carefully planned visits and other first-hand experiences in RE and other subjects ensure that pupils develop a good understanding and appreciation of other world faiths and cultures. They talk knowledgeably and insightfully about how the beliefs and traditions of other faiths compare to those of Christianity. They see Christianity as a world faith through their exploration of other cultures.

Displays and Christian symbols throughout the school celebrate and reinforce its status as a Church school and prompt pupils to reflect on aspects of Christianity and other world faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a valued time in the school day, with pupils being gathered from their classrooms and led into the hall by a child playing a tank drum. This simple form of gathering ensures a calm and reflective start to worship. Pupils sit in all age 'family' groups or rows. They light a candle to mark the start of worship and there is a shared greeting and response. This all contributes to pupils seeing collective worship as a special time. They develop their own spirituality through discussing and reflecting on the collective worship theme. Pupils talk about the Bible stories they hear in collective worship and the Christian values they learn from them for example Noah's Ark which reminded them to have faith in themselves and trust in God. All staff plan and lead collective worship. Weekly themes follow the calendar of the Church's year and explore Christian values. Collective worship is sometimes led by groups from outside the school, for example BJ puppets and pupils enjoy watching their presentations of Bible stories. The local incumbent is a regular visitor to the school and leads Eucharist and other celebration services, as well as a fortnightly act of collective worship. Her involvement in school life has increased pupils' understanding of Anglican traditions and practice, an area for development from the last inspection. Major festivals, for example Harvest, are celebrated in the local church. Pupils and parents process together from school to the church creating an explicit link between the two.

Pupils have a sound understanding of the purpose of prayer. They write their own prayers which are used at lunch time and often read prayers in collective worship. They talk enthusiastically about the recent prayer spaces week they took part in and, as a result, the school has plans in place to create permanent areas for prayer and reflection in the school.

Year 6 pupils plan and lead collective worship related to the weekly theme, but this is not the case for other year groups. Older pupils have some understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although the school has given careful consideration to the planning of collective worship, monitoring is underdeveloped and pupils' views on the effectiveness of worship are not yet routinely gathered and evaluated.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE follows the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus with adjustments being made to planning to accommodate year on year changes to class organisation. All teachers teach RE. They are currently trialling approaches to planning to increase the focus on pupils learning from religion as this has been identified as an area for development in the school improvement and development plan. As a result, older pupils are able to present their own views about what they have learnt for example about the beliefs and traditions of other religious groups and how they compare to Christianity. Younger pupils tell the Easter story and ask questions such as 'How did Jesus come back to life?'

The lesson observed was thoughtfully prepared and resourced. Pupils were challenged to discuss and interpret the Ten Commandments in the context of life today and make connections between them and their class golden rules. Those with special educational needs and disabilities were well supported.

Standards in RE are broadly in line with national expectations and other core subjects, with evidence of progression across the school. Pupils enjoy RE and the variety of activities they take part in to support their learning. They particularly enjoy the opportunities they have to act out Bible stories or religious ceremonies and their visits to the local church and other places of worship.

RE has a high priority in the school and the subject leader attends regular training sessions to update and extend her practice and that of her colleagues

There is some evidence of focused, formative marking in pupils' books. However, assessment is not yet consistent throughout the school, so there are some missed opportunities for information to be used to inform future planning.

Both policy and practice meet the statutory requirements and statement of entitlement.

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

The head teacher, staff and governors have a shared vision for the school as a Church school. This vision is supported by all stakeholders and clearly evidenced in the day to day life of the school. Governors are keen to maintain and strengthen the school's individuality and strong Christian ethos within a larger group of schools. The school improvement and development plan identifies appropriate areas for development under the heading of Church and community. The areas for development in the last inspection have been largely and successfully addressed. The school's Christian values, promoted by the whole school community, have a recognisable and positive impact on the life of the school. Responses to the parent questionnaire demonstrate their support for and appreciation of these values in action and the contribution this makes to their child's education. Leaders see their membership of DEMAT as a way of further promoting the school's Christian foundation.

The school works in partnership with the local church. A banner made in school and kept in the church provides a permanent acknowledgement of the partnership. Members of the church community and governors are welcomed into the school and act as role models for pupils, exemplifying Christian service. They help in classrooms, run clubs where pupils develop their individual interests and talents and help pupils to develop social and emotional skills. Pupils and their parents come together for celebration services led by the incumbent in the local church as well as family services held in school. The school also has beneficial links with the cathedral, which support pupils' understanding of the wider Church community. The school is making good use of the opportunities provided by DEMAT to inspire and train future leaders.

Although governors are regular visitors to the school and attend and monitor collective worship, they do not yet have a programme for the regular monitoring of both collective worship and RE. Their monitoring is not always sufficiently evaluative to fully support the head teacher and staff to further develop the school's effectiveness as a Church school.