



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

The Elton C of E Primary School of the Foundation of Frances and Jane Proby

School Lane, Elton
Peterborough
PE8 6RS

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire

Date of inspection: 05 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 12 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 110847

Headteacher: Rebecca Ford

Inspector's name and number: Judith Ruff 528

School context

The school is smaller than average with 126 pupils on roll. Since the previous inspection numbers have increased by 40%. This has put pressure on the classroom accommodation and a building programme to add two additional classrooms is in the planning stage. Approximately two thirds of the intake comes from outside Elton, from surrounding villages and from the outskirts of Peterborough. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those in receipt of Pupil Premium funding is well below national averages. All Saints Church is adjacent to the school. There is currently an interregnum in place.

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

- The deeply embedded Christian values enable pupils to develop a strong moral framework and a code for loving your neighbour as yourself
- High aspirations and effective staff role models support pupils to achieve and succeed, whilst growing in self-knowledge and confidence
- Excellent behaviour and relationships are underpinned by the belief that every child is special and unique, made in the image of God

Areas to improve

- Raise the governors' strategic input into the school through formalising monitoring and evaluation of RE and collective worship, so that outcomes from this impact on improving provision
- Develop pupils' depth of understanding of key world faiths, reinforced through a programme of visits and visitors, so that they can confidently explain similarities and differences between faiths

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

'From the first moment that I walked into the school, I was overwhelmed with the warmth and nurturing ethos of the school' said a parent. Christian values are 'in the air we breathe, they have given us an opportunity to bring religion more into our home as a discussion topic'. Both parents and children can easily and confidently articulate why the six core Christian values have been selected and how these have impact on family as well as school life. Pupils can explain the value of 'koinonia' through Jesus' work with the disciples, but also how this can shape their maturing as compassionate, caring individuals. They readily take on responsibilities, such as 'behaviour ambassadors', house captains or head boy and girl with humility and determination to do the very best they can to model the core values across the school. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils demonstrate impeccable manners, respectfully listening and contributing to discussions with a level of maturity and understanding beyond their years. Spiritual development is threaded throughout the vibrant and creative curriculum, but opportunities are maximised through a recent curriculum audit, which has raised its profile within the school. Moral and social development is outstanding, with rewards and sanctions clearly understood and used to motivate and guide pupils' responses to behaviour codes. Cultural development is very well supported through curriculum themes. Pupil achievement is very high, attendance is outstanding and there have been no exclusions. Pupils are valued as individual children of God with their own skills, talents and personalities contributing to the whole school family. Staff are excellent role models, with high expectations of pupils underpinned by a nurturing, inclusive approach to learning. Pupils' understanding of diversity within the Christian faith is supported by a close working partnership with the local Methodist community. The diocesan link with Vellore in Southern India has promoted pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith. Religious education makes a significant contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the careful integration of values' reinforcement within topics. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is excellent, giving them a sound basis from which to compare and contrast other world faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

'Pupils from the very youngest to the oldest are encouraged to join in with worship, finding it an exciting and inclusive experience'. Parents are deeply appreciative of the impact that collective worship has on their children, giving them a heritage of prayers and hymns that will stay with them throughout their lives. Through regular participation and opportunities to plan and lead worship, pupils are beginning to be able to understand why worship is so important to Christians. Worship has a clear structure with good reference made to Anglican liturgy. It is values led, reinforcing through Bible stories, sometimes dramatized, the importance of these to the way in which Christians are called to lead their lives in their relationships and behaviour to others. Pupils are given good opportunities to write their own prayers to contribute as part of worship. These are thoughtful and reflective, showing a mature understanding of using prayer to consider the needs of those less fortunate. High quality leadership of collective worship has impact on both adults and pupils. Its stimulating and creative presentation of themes enables participants to reflect on their own lives and respond where necessary. For example, a teacher new to the school spoke about the powerful way in which she had been enabled to reflect on her own life experiences through the worship themes. Pupils' understanding of the Trinity is at early stages, but Trinitarian prayers are included as part of worship. The church is used well for key festivals and parents appreciate being part of these acts of worship and also the way in which their children are active participants within the services. Collective worship includes good reflection opportunities on the chosen theme, with pupils having a lit candle to provide a visual stimulus. The school has benefited from both Anglican and Methodist clergy leading worship on a regular basis, in addition to other members of the local church community. Governors have supported collective worship through regular attendance and monitoring has taken place. However, these have not had demonstrable impact through lack of discussion amongst members of the governing body at either committee or main governor meetings.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education has a high profile within the school and pupils' views are very positive towards the subject. Oral evidence demonstrates that pupils have a thorough understanding of Christianity and that values are carefully woven through the planning to support and strengthen links to the Bible teachings. Written outcomes indicate that standards are in line with national expectations, although progress is more difficult to measure. The school has recently adopted 'evidence files', which show outcomes of three pupils in different ability bands over time. RE work is included for individual pupils within a general writing book, making it harder to locate pieces of work and assess progress of individual pupils. At present, governors are unclear on standards and progress in RE. Monitoring of RE by governors has been weak, with no evidence of discussions and debate at meetings to support improvements being made. The majority of teaching is good, with examples of outstanding teaching being observed during the inspection. Class lessons on Hinduism excited the pupils with excellent use of artefacts and investigative research with coloured cards to indicate secure knowledge and understanding through to 'I need to find out more'. Pupils interviewed clearly enjoyed learning about other world faiths, but their knowledge was limited, with confusion over each religion's key beliefs and practices. Visits and visitors associated with other religions are insufficient to enable the depth that first-hand experiences can bring to pupils' understanding. The headteacher is currently leading RE, covering the maternity leave of the substantive post-holder. She has included RE observations as part of the class teachers' performance management this year. Teachers new to the school and those who are less experienced are well supported in teaching RE and there are good coaching and mentoring arrangements in place to ensure that provision is good in terms of differentiation of work and assisting teachers with their subject knowledge.

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

Within this school there is a clear sense of leaders ensuring that the Christian ethos underpins and informs every aspect of the school's work. The six core values are prominently displayed on all publicity and have been through a thorough consultation process with all stakeholders. This includes an excellent home-school project, where pupils were invited to choose a particular value and work this through, looking at its practical application. The outcomes in terms of originality and creativity are stunning and have enabled families to understand how these values shape and influence lives. Self-evaluation processes have been collaborative, although at times too over-optimistic about where the school currently is. Senior leaders within the school demonstrate an unrelenting determination to ensure that provision is as good as it possibly can be. Outcomes in terms of pupil achievement for all abilities and personal well-being are very high. Strategic planning to support the development of the church school status is ambitious and thorough. Support from the diocese has been utilised effectively through a recent 'RE Health Check' and networking opportunities with other church schools within the diocese. There has recently been a significant turnover of foundation governors with many long serving and dedicated people retiring. A thorough induction of newly appointed foundation governors has not yet been fully completed. Although governors are in many ways totally supportive and proud of the church school heritage, there is a lack of written evidence at governor meetings that outcomes from monitoring and evaluation activities are being discussed and debated with recommendations taken forward to improve practice. Within the school there is good potential for aspirant leaders to be significantly involved with either training or modelling of excellent practice in both RE and collective worship. Leadership of both RE and collective worship are good, with high prominence given to both areas. The headteacher is a current 'Diocesan Consultant Leader' and supports another church school within the cluster as a 'Local Leader of Education'. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school as a very recent survey outcome demonstrated.

