



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Anthony Curton Church of England Primary School**

The Chase  
Walpole St. Peter  
Wisbech  
PE14 7NG

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 27 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 14 July 2011

School's unique reference number: 121138

Headteacher: Anne Senior

Inspector's name and number: Stephen Green 809

#### **School context**

Walpole Saint Peter is a small rural village. The school became an academy within the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT) in 2015 and has been in a partnership with Tilney All Saints Primary School for four years. There is an executive headteacher and joint local governing body for both schools. The headteacher has been at the school for ten years. The school roll (197) is rising. The parish is coming to the end of an interregnum, with a new rector due to take up post this Autumn. The incumbent of Tilney has worked with the school during this time.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Anthony Curton CE Primary as a Church of England school are good**

- Membership of DEMAT and the partnership with Tilney provide opportunities for support and development for both pupils and staff, and strengthen the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- The school's Christian ethos, and the dedication and vision of staff members and school leaders, have a strong and positive impact upon the lives of the pupils.
- Pupils are having a growing role in supporting, planning and leading collective worship. This means a lot to them and gives them a valuable sense of ownership.

#### **Areas to improve**

- To look for ways to increase contact pupils have with other Christian denominations, in order to increase their understanding of them.
- To ensure that lessons in religious education (RE) include more differentiation to ensure that all pupils can gain as much as they can from their lessons.
- To find ways to include parents in the process of gathering feedback from collective worship (CW), so that school leaders have a better understanding of which approaches parents see as being the most effective, and parents feel a greater ownership of CW.

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

The school has a clear Christian vision based upon distinctively Christian values. Although the values are not always recognised by every member of the school community, they are clearly displayed around the school and are sufficiently embedded to make a very positive impact upon the children's lives. The school's Christian distinctiveness is reinforced in CW and RE, so that pupils clearly understand that it is a Christian school. Most pupils make good progress; academic standards are at least as good as those in similar schools nationally, and in some cases better. Pupils with special educational needs and those who attract Pupil Premium funding, make good progress as a result of targeted additional support. Pupils' individual spirituality is a current focus for development. There is a small area for quiet reflection, and many opportunities to reflect upon learning and to offer prayers both publicly and individually. One pupil said how much she enjoys "the time we get on Friday afternoon to think about what we have been learning." CW was seen to include opportunities for pupils to reflect upon the theme, and to think about how it relates to them. There is a prayer box, with prayers being shared with both the partner school and the diocese. One of the children's prayers is selected as 'Prayer of the week', displayed in the hall and used by the whole school in CW. Pupils enjoy school; attendance is good and standards of behaviour are high. Relationships between all groups demonstrate the school's values of compassion, respect and tolerance. Pupils were seen to care for each other and to support each other when having difficulties. As one pupil said, "We get on well, and we can sort out most of our problems on our own." They have a strong voice, demonstrated by their charity work, and appreciate being obviously valued by school leaders. Parents are well aware of the school's Christian ethos but are less clear of its specific values. One spoke of being aware of the school's "noticeable Christian ethos in the way the school is run, and appreciate it." Another commented "I feel this school values each child and respects and works with their differences." RE makes a positive contribution to the school's Christian ethos, allowing time to explore issues being raised in CW and to consider what the school's values need to look like if they are to be realised. Work scrutinies revealed that most aspects of SMSC, which is well developed, were investigated as part of RE lessons. Pupils have a reasonable understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, and study other world faiths as part of their RE. A governor connected with the local high school stated that children from Anthony Curton stand out amongst their peers because of the ethos they have developed at the school.

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

Members of the school community readily acknowledge the importance of CW in the life of the school. It has a strong biblical focus and enables pupils to make meaningful links between the Bible, examples and stories drawn from the modern world, and their own lives. Pupils respond enthusiastically and enjoy the opportunities they are given to take a role in supporting worship. In response to one of the focuses from the last inspection, the school has very recently been giving pupils a greater role in planning and leading CW, both as part of their class assemblies and by establishing a collective worship group, currently of older pupils. These developments have not yet benefitted from sufficient time and encouragement to become embedded and to lead to the greater sense of pupil ownership of worship that the school seeks to achieve. Christian festivals are celebrated and despite the interregnum the school has continued to involve local clergy in leading CW and ensures that pupils visit the local churches for occasional services. With the appointment of a new incumbent the school is well placed to develop these links further. Worship is currently led by a variety of staff, one of whom is a lay reader, by the rector and curate of the partner school's neighbouring parish, and on occasion by leaders of the diocese. Parents spoken to during the inspection stated that they could see the effect CW and the school's ethos were having upon their children. "The emphasis is on respect and tolerance,"

said one. "It's taught that you should value everyone." Pupils all agreed that CW was an important part of their day, and that they enjoyed the opportunities they were being given to take leading roles within it. Pupils in the CW group, although as yet few in number, placed great value upon the opportunities they are being given to begin planning CW themselves. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the concept of the Holy Trinity, but are less well informed about the services Christians attend (e.g. the Eucharist). Leaders of other Christian denominations seldom have the opportunity to lead CW, and pupils have had no opportunities to visit their places of worship. Monitoring procedures are developing, with senior staff and pupils having the opportunity to provide feedback for those who lead and plan acts of worship. The school recognises the need to involve parents more in this process.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Teaching is usually of a good standard and as a result most pupils reach a standard of attainment which is at least in line with national expectations. Pupils respond enthusiastically and work well in group situations where the school's ethos of co-operation and mutual support can be seen in practice. Lessons are well planned, but are not always sufficiently differentiated to ensure that all pupils gain as much as they can from each lesson whatever their level of academic ability. Assessment procedures have recently been improved, and are now based upon Pupil Asset and Tapestry. Pupil Asset is widely used in DEMAT and across the partnership, making comparisons possible and making it easier for governors to interpret and draw conclusions about attainment and progress. Pupils are taught effectively about their own and other faiths using an enquiry-based approach. There is an appropriate focus upon Christian concepts and pupils have a reasonable knowledge of the core beliefs, the similarities and differences between faiths. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about other denominations within the Christian church, and this makes it harder for them to understand the similarities and differences between the Anglican church and other Christian groups. The subject leader is knowledgeable and leads his subject well. He has responsibility for leading RE and CW across both schools in the partnership, and is able to plan strategically to make the most of the schools' resources and staffing. RE is well resourced and staff training is given a high priority.

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

Leaders and managers share a strong Christian vision and commitment to every child in their care. Their thorough understanding of the school's performance is based upon accurate self-evaluation and regular monitoring. They ensure that the whole curriculum reflects their Christian vision, and look for ways to reinforce the school's Christian values. The governors' Foundation Committee plays a major role in strategic planning and review, ensuring that the school's Christian ethos is maintained. The development of all staff and governors is planned strategically and given a high priority. This benefits the school, contributes to training future leaders of church schools, and reflects the school's fourth aim (to 'actively encourage all our children and adults to develop their skills, gifts and talents...'). Staff feel supported and appreciated by school leaders. One stated that "Everyone supports each other. As a staff we feel listened to. It is very obvious that school leaders are developing a Christian ethos where all opinions are valued and everyone is respected." Parents, the diocese and the local community contribute fully to school life. The school has worked hard to maintain church input during the interregnum, arranging for the incumbent and curate in the partner school and representatives of the diocese to work within the school and continuing regular worship in the local church. Links with the PCC have developed since the last inspection. A mutually supportive partnership includes links between school and church websites, a regular family service at the church led by a teacher, and regular visits to the church for pupils. Interviews for the new rector took place in school. The partnership with parents is strong and their views are sought. Parents appreciate and strongly support the work of school leaders and staff. Many are positive about school leaders' faith and vision, praising the way they are moving the school forward.