



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Duchy of Lancaster Methwold CofE Primary School

Hythe Road,
Thetford.
IP26 4PP

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 15th March 2016

Date of last inspection: 3rd March 2011

School's unique reference number: 140712

Headteacher: Carole Reich

Inspector's name and number: James Adkins 821

School context

Duchy of Lancaster Methwold is a 98 pupil primary that joined the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT) and converted to academy status in May 2014. It entered into the Trinity Partnership in September 2015 with two other schools. This has led to each school having a head of school with an executive headteacher over all three. The school's Key Stage 2 progress rates are broadly in line with national figures as are its attendance rates, the proportion of Pupil Premium children and the proportion of children with special educational needs. Its 2013 Ofsted inspection graded the school as good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Duchy of Lancaster Methwold as a Church of England school is good

- The executive headteacher and head of school have a significant impact through the way in which they articulate, live out and promote a vision for the school based on the Christian value of "Jesus as our guide".
- Christian values are understood, shared and lived out on a daily basis at the school to support the development of every child.
- All members of the community explicitly support collective worship and recognise its impact.

Areas to improve

- To develop children's ownership of worship by providing opportunities for them to plan, lead and evaluate worship including writing and contributing their own prayers.
- To develop governors' monitoring of collective worship so that specific improvements can be strategically planned.
- To provide opportunities for the lead teacher to develop professionally and gain specialist qualifications in order to enhance the effectiveness of religious education.

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

At Duchy of Lancaster Methwold the core Christian vision of "Jesus as our guide" is deeply

embedded in the life of the school. It is explicitly and intrinsically linked to the different value statements that are displayed around the school, including; everybody makes a difference; this is my happy place; we enjoy and celebrate difference; stimulating learning is essential and 'I' am responsible for 'my' learning. As a consequence parents, staff and governors cite the impact of the school's Christian vision and values on achievement, attendance and exclusions, with standards being good because all groups of children make good progress. This is because the Christian culture of co-operation and sharing where every individual is valued enables the children to develop self-worth, resilience and take responsibility for their learning. Equally the distinct Christian values impact on the support for more vulnerable children. Governors cite the example of a particular child with challenging behaviour who has thrived since joining the school because of its Christian values as "All he needed was for people to care". The Christian character at the school has a significant impact on the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with relationships between all members of the school community being of the highest standard. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children is enhanced through a broad range of enrichment opportunities, with children speaking about how their horizons are widened through extensive activities including recent sporting and music festivals. These activities also involved a litter pick for Lent and the Bishops Lent challenge to further develop in the children an appreciation of the consequences of their actions. Parents cherish the Christian character and Christian values of the school "because not all children are lucky enough to have good values at home". The overt but inclusive nature of the Christian character promotes understanding and respect for all, with children of all religions and no religion being well supported within a caring environment. As one parent noted, they did not choose Duchy of Lancaster Methwold because it was a church school but they "could not wish for better". Religious education plays a key role in promoting respect and understanding for diverse communities, with the children stating that "it's really fun" because it mixes big questions with teaching about different religions such as Hinduism and Judaism. The systematic teaching of Christianity enables religious education to promote the ethos of the school by exploring Christian beliefs and values whilst its enquiry led approach supports an engagement with deeper theological questions. As a consequence religious education is established as a vital part of the curriculum and plays a central role in the Christian character of the school, with staff and governors making a direct link between the subject and the way in which the children treat each other.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Children enjoy collective worship which is held at the start of each day. Children describe collective worship as fun because its inclusive nature involves drama, music and quizzes which bring Christian teachings to life and inspires them. As a consequence great value is placed on collective worship by all members of the community and it can be clearly seen in all aspects of school life. For example its impact is evident in the behaviour of the children who take responsibility for their own actions and the actions of others. At the school collective worship follows the seasons of the Church's year and Christian festivals, with visits to the local church at times such as Easter and Christmas being very popular with the whole community. As a consequence learners have an impressive degree of understanding of these festivals, with one Year 2 child explaining that Jesus' "got hung to help us" rather than as a result of his own actions because "Jesus didn't do nothing" to deserve crucifixion. The involvement of the incumbent in these visits is valued, with parents stating that they "feel it is a duty to support him". As a consequence parents note that there is little standing room left available in the 165 seat local church for events such as Christingle. Collective worship develops personal spirituality within the community including a focus on prayer. Children were proud of their Lent promises that were displayed in the hall and about their contributions to the "share a prayer" wall. The children also spoke with confidence about the purpose of prayer in helping both themselves and others. Equally governors highlighted how the children understood the place and purpose of prayer. One governor gave the example of how, during a visit, an unhappy child informed them that they would "go to a prayer space" in order to reflect upon what had upset them. Collective worship uses biblical material that focuses on the person of Jesus Christ and God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the collective worship observed the

children openly enjoyed the extensive use of biblical material on the nature of Jesus as Messiah in the Easter story. Opportunities for children to participate in collective worship through contributing their own prayers or any involvement in planning, leading and evaluating worship is less well developed at present. Regular formal monitoring of the impact of collective worship at the school is also less well developed at present.

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

Leadership by the executive headteacher and head of school has a substantial impact on the school. Governors, parents and children highlight the impact of this leadership on the daily life of school to promote and live out Christian values, although these values were not as clear on the schools website. These values significantly impact on children's ability to develop positive relationships with their peers and with adults. This is recognised by the whole community who "like the idea of the Christian values that run throughout the school" because it enables all the children to develop socially, morally, spirituality and culturally. Leaders including governors ensure that the whole curriculum is informed by the core Christian vision of "Jesus as our guide". This is explicitly and intrinsically linked to the value statements that are used around the school and as teaching aids to promote Christian attitudes. For example parents highlight how leaders including governors ensure that children develop the Christian values of responsibility and respect so that they treat others as they wish to be treated. As a consequence these explicit and implicit links between the curriculum and its Christian character ensure that children at the school develop as people spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. There is an excellent relationship between the school and the local church, with visits to the church occurring as part of lessons and at festivals such as Harvest. For example last year the local congregation worshipped at another venue so that the church could be open for a weekend solely to host the school's Roald Dahl exhibition. The incumbent plays an active part in the life of the school both as a school governor and through leading collective worship. This has substantial benefits for learners, who speak enthusiastically about his assemblies and involvement in the school. Leaders including governors take every opportunity to develop relationships with parents and the wider community. This includes planned events such as muffins for mums to mark Mothering Sunday and encouraging the involvement of all families in the school. As a subject religious education is given a high priority and meets statutory requirements, with the lead having been appointed in November 2015 across all three schools in the Trinity partnership. What is less well developed at the current time are the opportunities for professional development of its lead including gaining specialist qualifications in religious education. Collective worship not only meets statutory requirements but is an essential part of the school. Both religious education and collective worship are valued by children, parents, staff and governors, with all making anecdotal links between these areas and the excellent behaviour of the children. Effective strategic leadership by the governors has led to the recent development of the Trinity Partnership and ensures that it provides opportunities to develop staff for leadership in church schools. This has resulted in actions such as diocesan personnel working with staff to review the religious education curriculum and the head of school undertaking the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership (NPQSL).

SIAMs report March 2016 Duchy of Lancaster Methwold CofE Primary School Thetford IP26 4PP