



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### East Bergholt Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane  
East Bergholt, Suffolk  
CO7 6SW

#### Diocese: St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Date of inspection: 16 October 2014

Date of last inspection: 25 March 2010

School's unique reference number: 124729

Headteacher: Mrs Gill Mitchell

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Judith Ruff 528

#### School context

The school has currently 178 pupils on roll. The majority come from the village of East Bergholt. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and those in receipt of pupil premium funding is very small. Pupils are mainly of White British heritage. Since the previous inspection there has been a change of headteacher and a leadership restructure. This has created two assistant headteacher posts. One of the assistant headteachers is the RE and collective worship leader. The church of St Mary's is a short walking distance away from the school.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of East Bergholt as a Church of England school are good

- The strong and highly effective links with the local church community are creative and imaginative, enabling pupils to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith and its practices
- The focus on development of spirituality across the school curriculum, which has encouraged and highlighted the importance of a reflective and enquiry based approach to learning
- The high quality and inspiring leadership provided by the RE and collective worship leader, who has supported, guided and enthused staff to understand the importance of these areas in a church school

#### Areas to improve

- To raise all governors' awareness and understanding of the distinctive Christian character of the school, so that they can be fully informed and enabled to support and challenge this dimension of the school's work
- To extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a diverse faith, both at a local and global level, so that they understand the impact of culture and traditions on worship

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

Christian values are clearly expressed across the school. These can be found in collective worship themes, classroom values' boards and in the ways in which pupils and staff relate to each other. Pupils understood that 'we need to be thankful for all that God has given us. It's like the leper remembering to say 'thank you' to Jesus'. Parents spoke glowingly of the impact these values have on their children's behaviour, with older children taking a real pride in being 'buddies' to those just entering the school. Prayer has a high profile within the school, with the Bergholt Friendly Garden (BFG) being very well utilised for quiet reflection and prayer. Pastoral care levels are high and pupils want to attend school and their attitudes to learning are very positive. Attainment and progress rates are high with an improving trend over time. The school has addressed fully the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development across the school and this practice is encapsulated in a well written policy document. Spiritual development of pupils is, as the school describes, 'a key curriculum driver' with all subject leaders incorporating this aspect into their curriculum plans. By doing this opportunities for reflection and moments of awe and wonder are strengthened. For example the 'WOW' walls show good examples of pupils' responses to philosophical questions emerging from their topic work. Behaviour of pupils is good and pupils can articulate the importance of forgiveness and justice as key Christian values, linking these to appropriate Bible stories. Pupils' understanding of the diversity of the Christian faith is presently rather limited, both at a local and a global level. Religious education (RE) makes a very positive contribution to both the SMSC and the Christian character and values of the school. Pupils' knowledge of Christianity is strong and they speak with great enthusiasm about opportunities to learn about other world religions and to be able to compare and contrast these with the Christian faith.

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

Collective worship is an important part of the school's life attended by the members of the whole school community. This includes staff, parents and governor representatives over the school term. The values' themes and Bible stories told enable pupils to reflect upon their responses to each other and impacts positively upon their behaviour. For example in the story of Joseph and his brothers, pupils understood how important it was for Joseph to forgive his brothers and understand that they had been changed by their experiences. Pupils' experience of worship has been deepened and enhanced by the formation of an 'Assembly Club' where upper Key Stage 2 pupils are involved in both leading and evaluating worship. Pupils interviewed were keen to explain how they constructed an act of worship, including writing their own prayers and putting together dramatic sketches of Bible stories. The impact of the local church community has been highly significant on the collective worship provision. Members of the church deliver regular 'Open the Book' sessions. One was observed during the inspection day. These sessions are much enjoyed, not only for their interactive nature, but for the range of Bible stories that they introduce through the use of drama and script. The rector is a much valued and inspirational leader, whose creative approaches to deepening pupils' understanding of Christian worship through church services, the 'Experience Christian festival' sessions and 'Messy Church' activities introduced for the children. Pupils interviewed knew about the Trinity through both collective worship and RE. Planning for collective worship is a collaborative exercise, including senior leaders and the rector. Evaluation processes are securely in place, including governor and pupil monitoring. The evaluations have led to numerous follow up discussions and improvements in practice, such as the 'Experience Pentecost' day held recently in the church.

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

The ability of the leadership team, including governors, to articulate the Christian vision of the school and its impact on achievement, Christian character and wellbeing is currently restricted

by insufficient time having been allocated by all governors and senior leaders to discuss these issues together. Governors' involvement in strategic planning opportunities such as the SIAMS action plan and self- evaluation form (SEF) is at present too limited. There is good evidence of a range of monitoring activities by two foundation governors, but these have not been discussed at governing body meetings in order to take key actions and recommendations forward. The local church community of St Mary's, under the strong leadership of the rector, is providing high quality leadership and support to the school community through a range of stimulating and innovative experiences designed to enable pupils to understand what it is like to live a Christian life. The headteacher is in her second year at the school. She is fully supportive of the Christian character of the school and has developed the values work in partnership with one of the assistant headteachers who is the RE and collective worship leader. The wide range of systems and structures that have been put into place by this assistant headteacher to promote and develop the importance of these two aspects within the school is very impressive. She has supported, coached and mentored less experienced staff to become more confident and effective in their approach and to understand the ethos and expectations of working in a church school. Succession planning is under-developed within the school, with staff absence impacting on the quality of provision. For example, the assembly club has not met during the assistant headteacher's maternity leave. Links with the Diocese are strong and are extremely beneficial to the school and its leadership. A recent SIAMS audit by the Diocesan RE Adviser gave some very useful guidance to school leaders on ways forward in terms of strategic leadership development.

SIAMS report October 2014 East Bergholt C of E Primary School CO7 6SW