



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Kelsale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Carlton Road
Kelsale
Saxmundham
Suffolk
IP17 2NP

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Date of inspection: 4 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 30 November 2009

School's unique reference number: 124735

Headteacher: Carolyn Taylor

Inspector's name and number: David Bunkell 815

School context

Since the previous church school inspection, a new rector has been appointed, and is a foundation governor. The parish church is more than half a mile away from the school. Through the local authority's school reorganisation programme, the school now caters for two further year groups, with pupils up to age 11. The school has expanded with new accommodation built to provide for the additional pupils, and furthermore many more pupils from beyond the immediate catchment area now attend the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kelsale CEVC Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Pupils have a very well-developed sense of spirituality, shown in their awareness of things and values greater than themselves, and in the depth of their concern and care for all in the school community.
- Religious education (RE) is at the centre of the curriculum, benefiting pupils' learning in all subjects, making a profound contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, and helping to define the Christian character of the school.

Areas to improve

- Seek further ways for pupils to experience people of other faiths, to increase their awareness of diversity, and respect for other faith communities.
- Build on the current important position of corporate prayer, to encourage further use of personal prayer, and so benefitting pupils' own spiritual journeys.

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

Christian values are highly apparent in every part of the daily life of the school, deeply embedded in all that takes place. A 'reflection board' in each classroom contains the Christian values, and currently includes pupils' own pledges for Lent. These values clearly have a highly positive impact on pupils, enabling those of all abilities and backgrounds to progress and to achieve. Pupils transferring to this school from other educational establishments said how quickly they had felt welcome, and invariably compared this school favourably with others they had attended. A sense of compassion pervades the school, with everybody caring for others in a mature way. The behaviour of pupils is always of the highest standard, directly as a result of an awareness of Christian values. Following a very minor playground incident, pupils spoke of their understanding of remorse, and showed that they were unequivocally able to forgive. Pupils show great maturity in their concern for any pupils with ongoing serious medical conditions, and give them their prayerful and practical support. Pupils understand that Christianity is a world faith, taking many forms. Although currently the school has no pupils of other faiths, pupils were able to explain that it is important to understand and respect those of diverse faiths, whom they will expect to meet at their next school and in future life, and showed that those pupils who already have a strong personal Christian faith are sympathetic to those who are not yet so certain. Knowledge of other faiths is an effective part of the religious education (RE) curriculum, but pupils' experience of people who follow other religions and of their places of worship is limited. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons, saying that 'it is learnt in a fun way', and are challenged by them. RE makes a significant contribution to their development, shown by their confidence in debating and questioning their beliefs and justifying their views. Through this, RE reinforces the Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily whole-school collective worship (CW) is seen by all in the school community as an essential part of the day, with Christian values reinforced, and impacting positively with direct relevance to all aspects of school life. A candle is always lit at the start of CW, and pupils understand that it represents Jesus as the light of the world and helps them to focus. CW regularly includes Biblical material, carefully chosen to link with the current theme, which is always one of a number of Christian values. At the time of the inspection the theme was 'truth' and pupils understood the dishonesty of Adam and Eve by eating the forbidden fruit, and how this story helped them to try to be honest and truthful. Two religious songs were sung with enthusiasm by the pupils, teachers and all the support staff, including the cook, who described CW as an important part of her day. The pupils understood the relevance of the words, referring later in conversation to the references in one song to the Holy Spirit, identifying the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The pupils also joined in spoken responses to the prayers. The seasons of the Church's year are followed, and major festivals observed. Four CW sessions each year take place in the parish church, planned jointly by those in the church and the school. These are at the start and end of the school year, for Christmas and on a school day near Mothering Sunday. Parents and governors attend these, along with members of the regular Sunday congregation. Pupils described their enjoyment of these visits to the church, saying that they have to speak out when there, and how it makes them feel special. The fact that the church is located about a 15-minute walk away prevents more frequent use. Parents also attend some CW in school, for example a harvest service. Prayer is an important part of CW, with prayers often written by pupils. Prayers are also said by pupils just before lunch, and at the end of the school day. Before going home, a further time of CW takes place, as pupils in each class spend 15 minutes reflecting perceptively on the successes of the day, linking them directly to Christian values. They also recognise anything that might not have been so successful, identifying how to do better in future. The worship table in the multi-purpose hall has a box that is intended for written prayers, but pupils said that it is never used and were confused about its purpose. A focus for development from the 2009 inspection was to embed and develop the role of the pupils in leading and evaluating worship. Pupils now play a

far more active role in planning and leading worship, and although their evaluation is not written, it is clear that staff regularly talk to pupils about the effectiveness of CW, and that their opinions have brought about improvements. Pupils known as 'collective worshippers' play a particular role in the whole process of planning and leading CW, either by supporting staff or by planning their own CW sessions. In addition to CW led by staff, pupils or the rector, an 'Open the Book' team visit to lead occasional sessions, and pupils appreciate this variety of approaches to CW.

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

Senior staff and governors promote the school's Christian vision at all times, clearly living this out in the daily life of the school. Pupils say that they are aware of this vision, and try to emulate it in their own approach to school. Evaluation of pupils' achievements and of the distinctiveness of the school is particularly thorough and honest, and all with leadership responsibilities understand how to make further improvements, having the capacity to carry these through, to meet the individual needs of every pupil and member of staff. A focus for development at the time of the 2009 inspection was to develop the roles of the newly appointed governors in sustaining the Christian vision for the school. As a result of this, all new governors now join a committee which monitors and evaluates the school's ethos, so this recommendation has been fully met. Christian values pervade the entire curriculum, contributing to the exemplary behaviour demonstrated by the pupils, and their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leadership of RE and CW have great priority, and are included regularly in improvement planning, meeting all statutory requirements in these areas. Parents feel very much to be part of the school family, in many cases choosing this school rather than others closer to home. Following success in a local swimming gala, parents who had been present were awarded certificates for their role in contributing to the achievement. In a recent parental questionnaire regarding aspects of the Christian values, the vast majority of parents responded positively, with particular appreciation of the way in which the school enables their children to develop morally and socially, and of the high expectations of pupil behaviour, attributed particularly to the Christian values. Nearly all parents responding to Ofsted Parent View would recommend the school to another parent. Partnership with the local church is strong, with the rector regularly visiting the school, either to lead CW, or to meet with staff and governors, or for less formal visits. Pupils had participated in fund-raising for the restoration of the lychgate at the church, then taken part with the Bishop at its recent rededication. Prayers for the school are said regularly at Sunday services in church. The wider local community is involved regularly in school life. Pupils said that they were looking forward to the pensioners' lunch the following day, with the opportunity to offer Christian hospitality, to serve the guests and to chat with them about the village in earlier times. Effective links with the diocese include training opportunities and discussions about the future viability and character of the school. All senior leaders are aware of the need to plan strategically for the future, and this includes training and supporting middle managers.

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