



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Ringsfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road  
Ringsfield  
Beccles  
Suffolk  
NR34 8NZ

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 28 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 29 September 2010

School's unique reference number: 124741

Headteacher: Vicky Allen

Inspector's name and number: Gill Hipwell 480

#### School context

Ringsfield is a small rural primary school sharing an executive headteacher with another small church school. There is a head of school for day-to-day management and a new RE co-ordinator working alongside the headteacher and poised to take over across both schools. There is a federation nurture group with specialist staff. The recent retirement of the active and long-standing incumbent has led both to an interregnum and a foundation governor vacancy. The parish church is a 30-minute walk away across fields.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ringsfield as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Strategies and initiatives focused on developing distinctiveness are carefully planned, discussed and embedded to ensure that they are secure and sustainable
- Adults and pupils demonstrate a shared commitment to supporting the most vulnerable
- High profile, high quality religious education sends clear signals about the importance of understanding faith and personal belief
- Distinctively Christian collective worship encourages personal reflection which has a direct and positive impact on attitudes, behaviour and decision-making

#### Areas to improve

- Support staff and pupils in the planning and delivery of class-based collective worship to ensure that there is consistency of provision
- Ensure that non classroom-based staff have a full understanding of the Christian values explored through worship and religious education so that they can play a full part in reinforcing them with pupils.

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

A shared understanding of the uniqueness of each individual, together with a commitment from adults and children alike to support each other, is a tangible expression of the school's core Christian values. Pupils understand and embrace the messages they hear in collective worship and make the most of opportunities to explore a specific Christian value in depth at the start of each half term. They talk with pride about their contributions to values displays and show good understanding of the connections between parables and their own lives. Compassion, respect, perseverance and thankfulness are woven into the school's policy, practice and vocabulary; as a result pupils love their school, work hard, take responsibility for themselves and others and achieve well. Proactive support for anyone felt to be vulnerable for any reason ensures that pupils are happy, progress for all groups is good and attitudes to learning are very positive. A strong focus on personal reflection and consistently identified opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the curriculum result in confident, articulate pupils who know that their opinions matter. Religious education has a high profile. It is a core subject, delivered both discretely and within the wider curriculum, and pupils are unanimous in their enjoyment of the subject. It is a vehicle for the exploration of Christian values in depth and develops skills that have a positive impact on other subject areas. Local cultural diversity is limited but there are opportunities within both religious education and the wider curriculum for pupils of all ages to learn about and, where possible, meet people from a range of backgrounds; younger pupils spoke knowledgeably about children from a Christian school in Kagera. There is an appropriate balance between cultural and religious diversity and also between communities abroad and in the UK.

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

Collective worship is a powerful driver of the school's Christian identity. Well planned worship, with a wide range of leaders which includes pupils, has a strong Christian focus and is firmly rooted in the Bible. Older pupils say that they appreciate the regular opportunities to plan and lead worship and these occasions are enjoyed by their peers. Pupils also spoke enthusiastically about the weekly input of the church lay reader, who they regard with great affection. There are regular visits to the parish church which is situated some distance away. Pupils say that they enjoy worship and they consistently identify it as a 'special' time of day where they can 'think about God' and 'decide what I should do'. Adults also identify worship as a time for reflection and say that it is sometimes 'challenging' and that it promotes some deep discussion with pupils. Whole school worship has a clear structure which mirrors Anglican practice and has a strong emphasis on prayer and reflection. Pupils show a sound understanding of the place and purpose of prayer, identifying times and places where it is significant to them. Many are comfortable with offering extempore prayer in worship. Quiet spaces both outside and indoors are well used and there are thoughtful contributions to the prayer tree. All pupils have a good understanding of God as Father and Jesus his son and our saviour; understanding of the Holy Spirit is less secure although some pupils were able to talk with understanding about Pentecost. A weekly 'forum' assembly is valued by pupils but does not always work successfully as an act of worship. Although staff are clear about the difference between worship and assembly, the weekly class-based circle worship is variable in its Christian focus. Worship is monitored by the governors' ethos committee who make sure that pupils are able to voice their opinions and put forward ideas.

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

There is a strong sense of teamwork and unity amongst staff and governors; strong leadership from the executive headteacher encourages and empowers others to take on responsibility. Strategic planning around ethos and Christian distinctiveness has resulted in a set of explicit Christian values which are embraced by all and embedded in policy and practice. Non

classroom-based staff interact well with pupils and play their part in reinforcing the values but they have limited opportunities to explore these values in their Christian context. Governors articulate the Christian imperative of making sure that every individual is seen as special and have made a huge commitment to supporting the disadvantaged; as a result standards are good for all groups. There is specialist nurture provision and meticulous ongoing assessment which results in appropriate and timely intervention for every vulnerable child, whatever the issue. The ethos committee works strategically with senior staff to identify targets and evaluate impact, feeding back to the governing body. Amongst other things they have promoted the centrality of religious education in the curriculum; taken steps to ensure continuity of church support during the interregnum; identified a new foundation governor and worked with staff and parents to sharpen the focus of trips and visits in order to widen pupils' cultural experiences. Significant partnerships with other church schools and the diocese play their part in affirming and strengthening the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Professional development is valued; governors say that aspiration is about everybody, not just children. Although a relatively recent arrival, the lay reader is already having a significant impact in the school and is beginning to suggest new ways of developing the partnership with the church. Parents are full of praise for the ethos of the school and give examples of how their children respond to the Christian values. They say that the values are clearly expressed and that their children discuss them with understanding.

SIAMS report June 2016 Ringsfield Primary NR34 8NZ