



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Gregory Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street
Sudbury
Suffolk
CO102BJ

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Date of inspection: 24th May 2016

Date of last inspection: 3rd March 2011

School's unique reference number: 124757

Headteacher: Daniel Woodrow

Inspector's name and number: Graham Lancaster 713

School context

St Gregory is an average sized primary school with 268 pupils on roll, which is located in the centre of Sudbury. Since the last inspection it has extended its age range to include the whole primary phase. The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those from ethnic minorities are below average. The school has a Special Support Centre (SSC) for pupils with complex needs which comprises 2 classes. This results in the proportion of pupils with statements or education health plans being above average. Since the last SIAS inspection there has been a change of headteacher and, more recently, deputy headteacher. The school had a Section 5 OFSTED inspection in March 2015 and was graded 'requires improvement'.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Gregory Primary as a Church of England school are good

- Following a period of some vulnerability highly effective leadership has led to a trajectory of improvement in standards, to increased confidence and contagious ambition for the school which is shared by all stakeholders.
- Christian distinctiveness permeates school life and stems from worship which engages, challenges, inspires and supports all who take part. It is central to the school's Christian life.
- Every individual within the school community is highly valued. Pupils of all levels of ability are given opportunities to explore challenging issues in depth and are confident and respectful of one another when discussing their views.

Areas to improve

- To promote the school's Christian distinctiveness by providing focused training and support for all teachers so that RE becomes outstanding in both teaching and spiritual development.
- To continue the trajectory of improvement in overall standards, particularly in respect of provision for the more able (mastery) across the curriculum, including RE, utilising existing strengths in assessment and marking to ensure that high expectations are

maintained.

- To develop physical areas, both inside and outside, which provide opportunities for pupils to engage in reflection and prayer and support their spiritual development.

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

Although St Gregory's does not currently set out its agreed Christian values overtly the school's Christian distinctiveness is recognised and valued by parents, staff and pupils alike. The thematic approach to collective worship explores each value in depth, which is reinforced within each classroom age appropriately and within the SSC. The school's action plan identifies the need to raise the profile of all of its Christian values, both within the school environment and on the website. Staff exemplify high expectations in their relationships with one another which are reflected amongst pupils whose behaviour is exemplary. Well-established links with Kenya through Education Exchange provide a valuable multi-cultural dimension in this predominantly white British school. Although reflection and prayer are well established within collective worship there is scope to provide places, prompts and opportunities for pupils to develop and explore spirituality. Religious education is effectively planned and delivered in imaginative and creative ways which engage all pupils and encourage high level discussions. Pupils of all ages describe their learning within RE with enthusiasm and insight. In one lesson pupils gathered materials from outside and created a representation of the cross. To describe her artwork one pupil wrote 'the twigs were used for making the cross and we joined them with stringy weeds, representing the binding of love between us, Jesus and God. The thorns represent the crown of thorns Jesus wore, the dead leaves the mourning at his death. The single snow drop is hope'. There is an explicit commitment to the development and progress of every pupil, including the most vulnerable. This has resulted in the school narrowing the gap between outcomes and national averages. Detailed analysis of pupil progress informs development priorities, intervention and support. Attendance has improved over the past two years and is now in line with national. Pupils contribute to identifying and planning the school's charitable giving eg instigating a different approach to Remembrance Day which resulted in a significant increase in the funds raised. Through RE pupils appreciate the importance of understanding other faiths and respecting people with different beliefs. Those without a personal Christian faith are confident to participate in class discussions.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the ethos of the school. Each theme is explored using probing questions which are further developed in incremental depth as pupils progress through the school. A striking display in the entrance lobby introduces all visitors to the school to the current theme, presents the series of weekly challenging questions and includes biblical references and subsequent pupil responses. Parental engagement is encouraged through follow-up materials which are sent home and made accessible through the website. An increasing number of parents now attend class worship which is predominantly led by pupils, a new initiative this year. Collective worship is held in the parish church regularly and one parent reported that often so many parents attend that there is standing room only. Leadership of collective worship now includes staff and pupils as well as visitors from local churches. They are provided with a structure for planning and with support as requested. Overt opportunities for learning about the person of Jesus and exploring the Holy Trinity are woven into planning. Discriminating use is made of strategies and resources such as IT, music, drama and talk partners. Worship positively influences pupils' attitudes and behaviour and their SMSC development at the highest level, as one pupil expressed it, 'Christianity isn't only about learning what's in the Bible, it's the qualities you have as a person'. All pupils and staff attend worship. Pupils lead a responsive welcome and blessing which reflect the distinctive Anglican tradition. Everyone sings with enjoyment and a true sense of worship. Pupils of all ages are very enthusiastic to participate and answer questions. Worship is underpinned by biblical teaching

which is carefully chosen and clearly explained and is also directly related to current events and pupils' life experiences. Prayer is pitched to enable pupils of all ages to access it and, is frequently led by the pupils. Pupils make direct reference to recent and past worship in their classrooms, in RE lessons and in general discussions. Governors regularly attend worship and provide evaluative feedback, identifying aspects to be followed up on future occasions. 'It was not a trivial assembly, I was absorbed. I will find time to talk to the pupils about what they remember'. Different groups of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 meet weekly with the collective worship and RE leaders. Their evaluations and reflections on worship through that week are captured in a Reflection Journal. When considering hope in the context of the Easter and Pentecost pupil response included; 'hope does not just happen, you have to do something and it can take time' (Year 6); 'a hope is something that can come true, a dream doesn't usually' (Year 1). The school has planned for every pupil to contribute to this striking document by the end of the academic year. In addition, the Pupil Council regularly discusses collective worship and their ideas for developing class worship in particular have been recorded, discussed by governors and acted upon. This is exemplary practice.

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

Following a period of some uncertainty for the school the headteacher has built a highly effective team of staff who share his clear vision and aspirations for the school. His infectious enthusiasm has engendered a universal commitment to provide an engaging and challenging learning experience for every pupil premised on the school's distinctive Christian character. This has resulted in improved outcomes and significant progress towards St Gregory being judged as at least good by OFSTED within the next 12 months, a view which has been endorsed by external agencies. Leadership is very effectively distributed with members of the senior leadership team forming action teams to address priorities for improvement. Plans are under way for teachers to have greater ownership of the teaching of RE. In addition to raising standards it is intended that this will also provide opportunities to identify individuals who would benefit from advice and training from the Diocese to equip them as future church school leaders. Areas for development from the previous SIAS inspection have been addressed and plans made for further improvements based on rigorous and accurate self-evaluation. All steps in this process have involved discussion and debate with staff and governors. Governors carry out focussed monitoring visits against identified priorities, completing detailed visit notes for further discussion at their meetings. The school works in partnership with local schools within the Sudbury pyramid and representatives of the diocese are frequent visitors, providing both challenge and support. Despite there being no incumbent at present there remains a strong partnership between the Church and the school. This extends beyond collective worship to use of the building to support RE and joint planning of events for the local community.

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