



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

**Elsworth Church of England (Aided) Primary School**

Broad End

Elsworth

Cambridge

CB23 4JD

**Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire

Dates of inspection: 13th March 2014

Date of last inspection: 14th and 15th January 2009

School's unique reference number: 110830

Headteacher: Mrs Theresa Thornton

Inspector's name and number: Mr Chris Wilson-Town 686

**School context**

This is a smaller than average rural primary school, serving Elsworth and surrounding villages. There is a pre-school on site. The majority of pupils are from the village, though many travel through parental choice. The proportion from black minority ethnic groups is below national averages, though above most schools locally. Very few are eligible for free school meals. There has been a significant change in governors since the last inspection and there is a new RE leader. The church is a short walk from the school.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Elsworth Aided Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Elsworth Church of England Primary School practises its Christian mission of 'Loving Trusting Sharing' in all its relationships and demonstrates that the spiritual and moral development of all pupils through Christian principles underpins its actions, teaching and learning.

**Established strengths**

- The Christian leadership and commitment shown by headteacher, staff and governors to make real the school's Christian vision and values, and ensure that the school community sees this in all aspects of school life.
- The knowledge and confidence with which pupils talk about being part of a

Christian community, their understanding of and participation in prayer and their enthusiasm for developing this aspect.

- The excellent relationship between the school and church which ensures that pupils and parents can participate in active Christian worship and greatly contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Ensure that all pupils contribute to and participate in key stage worship so that they can share their prayers and enjoy greater age-appropriate reflection and discussion.
- Improve the opportunities both inside and outside the school for pupils to have quiet spaces for prayer and reflection.

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

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners. Love of God and love of neighbour do stand at the heart of this school's life. Parents agree that pupils are happy and flourish and see that Christian faith is made very real and instilled in pupils through the consistent modelling by staff. Older pupils helping in the shop and pre-school and meeting the elderly residents in Boxworth are seen as examples of Christian service. The school's Christian mission of Loving, Trusting, Sharing permeates throughout behaviour, attitudes and teaching, supported by its explicit presence within Collective Worship. Christian values are evident in the way relationships are formed and parents describe how the headteacher leads by example. Attendance is very good and one parent explaining how compassion and patience was shown during a significant period of pupil absence. The caring support of a Traveller family, whose Christian practice differed markedly from the school's, meant the pupil came to lessons and did well. Pupils say that 'God loves all of us because we're special' and 'it is good for a school to be religious because it helps us to care'. Prayers are said daily, as is grace. One parent describes how grace is now said at home. Pupils understand prayer and reflective time but say that there is nowhere in school where they can sit quietly and do so. The prayers for Syria and Afghanistan demonstrate very good compassion and understanding of the challenges facing these two countries. Such work encourages pupils to appreciate other people's religious perspective and cultural backgrounds. Through the school and eco councils and buddy system, pupils can exercise responsibility and show care and stewardship. The outside areas are well used and pupils are keen to see spaces kept specifically for prayer and reflection.

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

Collective worship is a highly valued, central part of the school day enabling pupils and adults to come together in praise and prayer. The headteacher and rector share the planning of the programme ensuring that 'Loving, Trusting, Sharing' are well

linked to Anglican traditions and practice. In the worship observed, pupils showed good levels of Christian knowledge, in particular responding to the parable of the Feeding of the Five Thousand. Parents say that the Friday worship enables them to see how pupils have put the weekly theme into practice and to share in that celebration. Parents feel worship provides pupils with a strong spiritual and moral compass, demonstrating the integrity and mutual respect of pupils and adults, and is reflected in attitudes at home. Year 6 pupils act as worship monitors, read out the chosen prayer and contribute well to the worship record. Pupils from other year groups say they would be like to more involvement, distinguishing between whole school and key stage worship which they say is less participative. Pupils understand the nature and purpose of prayer, 'praying for God to care for others' or 'to say sorry', write prayers, particularly in RE, and are keen to share them with their peers. Pupils talk enthusiastically about 'singing to God' in school and in the church, especially at festivals, demonstrating how the school community celebrates its Anglican faith and practice. Governors monitor and evaluate whole school worship very well with a strong focus on impact. Their record provides secure evidence that pupils are introduced to aspects such as the Trinity, through appropriate and engaging activities. Governor monitoring does not yet extend to the key stage worship.

#### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

The subject is in transition as the school embraces the new Agreed Syllabus and develops its scheme of work. The lesson observed showed commitment to enquiry based learning. Pupils had clear learning objectives about exploring feelings and viewpoints regarding Jesus arriving in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Some pupils showed good contextual and prior knowledge. Using role-play enables pupils not strong with literacy to make good contributions. Those with special educational needs and disabilities are well supported, especially by their peers.

Good quality displays enable pupils to present and celebrate their achievements. Working with a theology student allows older pupils to explore in depth and gain greater understanding of Christian belief, including the nature of God. Opportunities are taken to link RE topics with real events such as an impending wedding. Pupils talk with confidence about Christianity and other faiths. One pupil said that he had learnt in school that Jesus had died on the cross for our sins. Parents say RE encourages feelings of tolerance and inclusiveness; a pupil bought a book on Buddhism to find out more and another shared different faith artefacts.

Standards are judged good matching the core subjects; common assessment procedures are securely in place with work portfolios enabling links to be made across the curriculum. Through self and peer assessment and clear targets, pupils know how to improve. Discussing pupils' levels in staff meetings means that RE has a high profile within the school. The subject leader provides secure leadership, is well-supported by the headteacher and resources are in line with other subjects. Both policy and practice meet the statutory requirements and statement of entitlement.

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

### **outstanding**

The headteacher provides excellent leadership so that all staff and governors are united to present the school's Christian distinctiveness to the whole community and ensure that it is fundamental to the life of the school. The easy to use school website is clear about Christian values and parents say that the Home School agreement in which staff and governors aim to provide an understanding of Christian faith and values for all children is 'lived out'. It is clear that the Christian ethos is a key feature of recruitment. This openness means staff can make personal contributions to pupils' Christian learning as seen in the Treasure Trek club, where pupils explore the Bible's meaning and impact through learning games and quests. The relationship with the church is a strength and the rector plays a significant role in supporting the school's vision and practice. As a result, pupils benefit from access to symbols of the Christian faith and the rector's commitment to pupils putting faith into practice. The liturgical tablecloth, created in partnership with older children, is highly valued and displayed in the entrance area. Parents greatly value pupils' participation in church services and see it shaping relationships between school, church and community. The foundation governors see it as their calling to make the school the best it can be for the pupils. All governors take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating Christian distinctiveness, and know the school very well. Self evaluation is accurate and the development areas from the last inspection have been largely and successfully addressed. Collective worship policy meets statutory requirements but pupils say that sometimes pupils miss or are late for key stage worship which impacts on consistency and equality.

SIAMS report March 2014 Elsworth Church of England (Aided) Primary CB23 4JD