



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Great Barton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road

Great Barton

Suffolk. IP31 2RJ

Diocese: St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 12th February 2014

Date of last inspection: 24th March 2009

School's unique reference number: 124697

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Rees

Inspector's name and number: Elizabeth Pitcher 448

School context

The school is a smaller than average first school which is in the process of becoming a full Primary school. Just over half of pupils come from the catchment area, and the remaining pupils travel from beyond the school's immediate area. Almost all have some pre-school experience. The full range of ability is represented in the school's intake, and overall the pupils' attainment on entry to the school is around that expected nationally. There is a clear Christian presence in the school from the church community and Foundation Governors are actively supportive.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Barton Primary school as a Church of England school are outstanding

This school is firmly rooted in its Christian ethos, which provides a strong and positive influence on pupils' values and attitudes. Consequently, caring relationships enable a happy, family atmosphere to permeate throughout the school and its community, within an inclusive ethos of high expectations and outcomes. Most pupils enthusiastically express their views, whilst demonstrating a clear understanding of how Christian principles influence their positive behaviour. Excellent and committed relationships with the local churches, incumbent and Foundation Governors underpin all aspects of school life. Parents speak very highly of the school, as a church school, and appreciate the underpinning values and principles which are reflected in the care

shown to their children, through a holistic approach, as they develop positive relationships with each other and with the wider community.

Established strengths

- Consistent Christian leadership, including the commitment of Foundation Governors
- Positive relationships permeate the learning community
- Pupils' positive attitudes towards their school, their learning and each other
- Reflection and philosophy are valued
- Collaboration and partnership working actively welcomed with the Thurston Partnership and the Cambridge and Suffolk Schools' Alliance
- Support from local churches which enriches the effective partnership that exists between the school, the church and the wider community

Focus for development

As the school is expanding into a Primary school, the development points are linked to impending changes:

- To ensure smooth transitions for pupils, staff and governors through the process of change.
- To review the current monitoring and evaluation procedures of Collective Worship (CW) and Religious Education (RE) and the impact of each on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development.

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

Positive relationships, based on Christian values, and a sense of self-worth are fostered throughout the school. This has led to confident, articulate pupils who care enthusiastically for their school, about each other and with a growing awareness of the wider world. Members of the School Council and Eco Council enjoy their responsibilities and know what to do in order to help others. For example, one child clearly explains how they can help and support other children in the playground. Pupils willingly help to raise money for specific needs and clearly understand the difference between service in relation to immediate need – for example, when giving to the Philippines Typhoon crisis – as well as the commitment to longer-term needs. These positive attitudes reflect the biblical values taught in CW and RE, both of which are important and intrinsic elements of this successful school.

RE is developing its impact across the curriculum and attitudes, reflecting the Christian character of the school are strongly embedded. The opportunities for reflection, music-making, sports activities and Sparks (the Christian group) combine to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents are appreciative of the 'open door' relationship with the school community and say they feel valued and welcomed. Their children are happy and settle well into school routines and expectations, as a result of which they achieve well.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is Good

Collective worship is important to the school. The headteacher takes responsibility for the planned programme of themes by using Values for Life as the main approach. Planning as a whole reflects the main festivals of the Church year, such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, and there is some awareness of teaching about the Trinity at Pentecost. Bible stories are brought to life as pupils experience different styles of worship, for example through regular visits from the Vicar, members of the church community and the Open Book group, which is particularly popular with pupils. Most pupils enjoy collective worship, and most enthusiastically respond to the opportunities they have to participate in acting-out Bible stories, responding to questions and times for reflection.

The pupil voice is valued through responses and reflection, prayer and participation. Clear expectations ensure that pupils walk calmly and quietly into the Hall at the start of Collective Worship and respond appropriately to 'The Lord be with you'. Although the Lord's Prayer is displayed, currently there is no specific focal point in place during the act of Collective Worship. The school is aware that the restricted space in the Hall prevents effective displays to promote further reflection beyond that of daily worship, and the headteacher is keen to overcome this physical barrier, and willing to try out new ideas.

The current Year 4 pupils make good progress as worship leaders and write their own prayers. The aim next year is for the new Year 6 pupils to plan and prepare Collective Worship for the whole school. Pupils clearly explain their understanding of how to support each other and how to work well together, based on Christian values for life.

Generally, the church building has limited use because of distance and traffic difficulties – although the Christingle service, which did take place in the church, was very well received by pupils and parents. In order to overcome this problem, members of the church are committed to visiting the school, and are welcomed on a regular basis.

Currently, the monitoring and evaluation of CW is mainly informal, involving governors, staff and pupils. As a result of evaluation, new artefacts have been purchased and singing materials have been revised.

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

The headteacher's strong Christian leadership has established a safe, secure environment in which all pupils thrive and achieve well. High levels of pupil progress are promoted through tailored, differentiated support for all learners, which reflects an inclusive ethos, underpinned by Christian principles. The school is well supported by the Church and relationships between staff and governors are cohesive and strong, alongside mutual respect between all stakeholders. There are planned visits to the

cathedral. Parents identify with the Christian ethos of the school and are appreciative of its high standards, whilst they commend staff for their approachability. They speak highly of the school as a Church school, and recognise its influence on their children, enabling them to be happy and successful learners.

The project 'Be the best you can be' serves to promote the school's inclusive ethos, with its emphasis on developing pupils' self-esteem and aspirations, through personal reflection and identification of personal goals. Pupils demonstrate understanding of the key aspects of Christianity and Christian values, and how these can be transferred to everyday living, for example reflected in compassion, friendship and service. As a designated Forest School, good use is made of the school grounds, to enable all pupils to gain experience of outdoor learning.

RE has high status in the school and is developing strategically. For example, specific RE training has taken place, along with a review of planning, with assessment as the next priority for development. Foundation Governors demonstrate high level commitment in serving the school and to working cooperatively with the headteacher and the school team to ensure the ongoing promotion of the school's Christian ethos.

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