



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Honington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Malting Row
Honington
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk

IP31 1RE

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS inspection grade: Good

Diocese: St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 28 April 2016

Date of last inspection: 14 July 2011

School's unique reference number: 1247027

Headteacher: Lauren Moore

Inspector's name and number: Elizabeth Pitcher 448

School context

This rural primary school, which serves Honington and several surrounding villages, has 159 pupils on roll, 60% of whom come from RAF Honington. As a result of the Suffolk organisation review the school became an all-through primary in 2014. The number of pupils with special educational needs is almost 6%. The headteacher joined the school in September 2015. The church is immediately next to the school and the retired former incumbent, who is also a foundation governor, takes responsibility for the school on behalf of the church community.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness Honington as a Church of England school are good

- The strong Christian leadership of the new headteacher is resulting in the deepening of pupils' personal understanding of Christian love and service.
- Dedicated staff understand and support the needs of pupils well and this has led to pupils' positive attitudes towards their school, their learning and to each other, within an inclusive ethos of 'Aspiration for All'.
- Collective worship (CW) is central to school life and has a positive impact on pupils' growing awareness of the purposes of prayer

Areas to improve

- To extend the foundation governors' monitoring so that impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development can be evaluated.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship for greater

impact on their personal understanding of worship.

- To increase opportunities for understanding of national and global communities, so that pupils develop a deeper appreciation of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

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

The school's Christian ethos statement is clearly reflected in all aspects of this vibrant Christian community, as it strives to provide 'an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice'. The Christian values of compassion and respect are demonstrated through the close attention paid to the achievement and wellbeing of all pupils, irrespective of background or ability. Improving aspiration for all by raising standards, so that each pupil can 'be the best we can be', is rightly recognised as an expression of Honington's mission as a church school. This is a friendly, purposeful learning environment which means that most pupils learn well, leading to attainment which is mainly above average. The newly refined tracking system enables senior leaders to closely monitor pupils' progress, which leads to teachers and teaching assistants providing timely and tailored support for vulnerable groups. Pupils are encouraged to be active, curious learners, so they are eager to come to school, work together and support each other. The church school ethos is captured through Christian displays and areas for personal reflection. This leads to a sense of cohesion and shared understanding when pupils explain events of the church year, refer to school rules of 'friendship, excellence, respect' and their writing of personal thoughts on the Wisdom Tree. Pupils respond well to good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provided through worship and religious education (RE). In RE pupils are becoming aware of the diversity of religious beliefs and practices and recognise distinctive Christian concepts for example, the sacrifice of Jesus dying on the cross. As a result, they make links with their own sacrificial giving to charity and helping others before themselves. Positive attitudes explored in biblical values are reflected in understanding of such concepts as justice and respect, which shine through when talking about the 'Link to Hope' shoebox appeal and the Macmillan fundraising event of which they are proud.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. This is because it is effective in promoting the school's Christian values and brings everyone together to worship as a church school family. The headteacher, as co-ordinator for worship, demonstrates its high priority in the life of the school. Since September 2015 teachers lead worship and current monitoring indicates that CW is delivered well. For example, pupils are given 'time to think, time to pray' about key Christian themes and this positively influences their behaviour and attitudes through the school day. Padres from RAF Honington lead worship, as does the clergy foundation governor for special occasions, such as Remembrance and notably the Easter service, involving outdoor procession to church. The 'Values for Life' programme ensures a clear structure for systematic exploration of biblical teachings and themes. Consequently, worship contributes well to pupils' developing knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, irrespective of their own, or their families' faith position. The Anglican pattern of worship is valued and positive attitudes to this pattern is demonstrated through pupils' joyful singing, quiet listening, keen responses and calm reflection, making a significant impression on pupils' spiritual development. They understand the meaning of Christian symbols - the lighting of a candle is understood to represent "Jesus, the light of the world" and the cross, as a symbol "that Jesus died". They say that "God made the world and Jesus made it better". Prayer is important to daily life. The Lord's Prayer, leading their own prayers and eagerness to write and display prayers combine towards a growing understanding of the purpose of prayer – for example, giving thanks, when saying grace before lunch and praying for others. Personal reflection is promoted and this extends to reflection in classrooms, where pupils talk enthusiastically about kindness to others because "you should treat people how you want to them to be to you".

Some pupils are starting to show an understanding of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and there are plans for specific teaching on the Trinity. A previous development point, Open the Book is currently being explored to widen pupils' experience of interactive biblical teaching.

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

The commitment of the headteacher, together with the governing body and well supported by staff, means that the vision and core values are put into practice at all levels of school life. These values shape decision making and policies. For example, review and evaluation of RE in relation to the school's Christian character has led to a new action plan for improvement. Subsequent observations show that RE already has a raised profile by improved attitudes, which positively influences behaviour and learning.

The action plan for improving the quality of CW is clearly focused on priorities, with governors developing a stronger strategy for monitoring its impact on pupils.

School leaders have attended relevant CW training which has led to support for class teachers in their own delivery, with further diocesan training planned. Leaders have set up a new pupil 'assembly team' for the purpose of developing planning and leading of CW. The school meets the statutory requirements for CW and RE. As opportunities for meeting Christians from other Christian traditions are limited, the headteacher is exploring how to introduce cultural diversity through the RAF overseas links.

Parents speak very highly of the school, as a church school. They appreciate underpinning values and principles reflected in the care shown to their children and to themselves. They say their children settle well and are happy and that the headteacher is very approachable. As a part of the strategic plan for improvement within the context of aspiration for all, school leaders ensure that attendance remains a school priority. They work towards ensuring that all parents and carers are fully informed and committed to this priority, which is mainly due to mobility of service families. The chair of governors, who is a member of the local church, includes SIAMS as an ongoing agenda item at governors' meetings. Leaders have initiated positive partnerships with two other church schools who share ethos and expectations and mutual professional curriculum development. The development point from the previous inspection regarding enhancing external signage as a Church of England has been considered, but cost prevented the school taking action. The indoor Christian environment is well developed.

SIAMS report April 2016 Honington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
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