



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Holywell C of E Primary School

Mill Way
St Ives, Cambridgeshire.
PE27 4TF

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire

Dates of inspection: 5 December 2014

Date of last inspection: December 2009

School's unique reference number: 110817

Headteacher: Julie Branch

Inspector's name and number: Marion Betts

School context

Holywell school is a one form entry school for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and almost all speak English as a first language. The headteacher has been at the school for 3 years. Since September she has undertaken the additional post of executive headteacher of the federation of Holywell with a community school in another local village. The federation's governing body is newly formed.

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

- The school's Christian values are known and understood by all pupils who recognise them as explicitly linked to scripture and they have a very positive impact on pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development.
- The very effective leadership of the executive headteacher promotes the Christian vision and values of the school which ensures that they are embedded in policy and practice.
- A very strong emphasis is placed on care, respect and support for each other as a result of the school's core value of responsibility and this is demonstrated by all throughout the school community.
- Strong links have been made with the local church and members of its congregation which explicitly communicates the school's church school distinctiveness.

Areas to improve

- Ensure the development of the federation protects and strengthens Holywell's church school identity so that its distinctiveness is sustained and further enhanced.
- Develop the pupils' understanding of the Christian church at national and international level so that they become more aware of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.
- Evaluate the impact of the school as a church school and of collective worship through the use of pupils' views so their ideas influence future vision and development.

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

The whole school curriculum is devised with drivers of Christian values and opportunities for the development of pupils spiritually, morally, and socially incorporated at the very beginning of planning. This ensures that these areas are embedded within each curriculum subject or topic. Outdoor learning in forest school provides opportunities for pupils to experience awe and wonder and learn to take care of and protect God's creation. The culture of the school is built around the 5R values and extra ones taught within collective worship such as recently, the forgiveness topic. Pupils recognise the school values as linked to the biblical passages displayed and stories told during collective worship and following these sessions pupils are given opportunities in small group discussion to develop further understanding. How these lead them to make correct behaviour choices is clearly articulated by pupils who strive to achieve these in their school life. The school's 5R values – resilience, responsibility, reciprocity, resourcefulness and reflectiveness - are deeply embedded in the school's daily life and promote positive learning attitudes. The result of the consistency of these values being applied by all ensures pupils make very good academic progress with standards high and above national level in almost every aspect. Disadvantaged groups of pupils also achieve well because they are given appropriate academic and pastoral support. The 5Rs also result in making a powerful and positive impact on pupils' attitudes, actions and behaviour. The value of reflectiveness underpins the whole curriculum and as a result the pupils have many opportunities for choice and decision making and for understanding the opinions of others. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. The school's value of reciprocity contributes to the well-being of all. Relationships and respect between staff and pupils are outstanding and demonstrate this value in action. The whole community is characterised by praise used effectively and a sense of positive well-being. Pupils enjoy their school life and praise the care of the staff who listen to them and help with their problems. Each child's needs are known and catered for. This is demonstrated by the daily sensory training activities undertaken to support individual needs. As a result of the culture within the school of undertaking responsibilities, older pupils are listeners to younger pupils and help them to resolve any problems they may have. The school has links with many global schools. Pupils are beginning to understand diverse cultural communities but have not yet studied the role of the Christian church at national and international level. Religious education is considered as an important subject by pupils who really appreciate the opportunities during this for them to consider and discuss together "big questions" that extend their own personal growth and belief and considers how others from a different or no faith basis may have varied views.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship (CW) is regarded by the whole school community as a central part of each day. Different leaders and groups invited add to the variety of style of the worship and the community's enjoyment. CW is the main way in which the school community derives and understands its value system that underpins school life. It is extremely important to staff and pupils who regard it as affirming a sense of the school's whole community. Bible stories and scripture are used for illustrating the Christian origin for the values. Staff appreciate being present and comment on the benefit of this spiritual opportunity for them personally. Reflection time as one of the school's 5Rs results in allowing pupils and adults to reflect on the application of the values to their own experiences and attitudes. This reflection is followed up in class worship sessions which consolidate the teaching and allows pupils within a smaller group to question and gain added understanding. Themes for collective worship are also planned around the Church calendar and worship has a set pattern of liturgical elements. Through this, together with the regular Christian visiting worship leaders and the regular worship sessions that take place at the church, pupils are gaining an understanding of Anglican traditions and practice. Creative delivery using visual presentations engages pupils' interest and

adds to their understanding of the message or learning. Pupils contribute to class worship and as a result of pupils wishing to be more involved in planning, presenting and evaluating worship the Pupil Worship group has been recently formed. Pupils develop their personal spirituality through the many reflection and prayer opportunities. They compose their own prayers and devise spontaneous prayer during worship. They are beginning to understand the purposes and variety of prayer and its importance within the Christian life of the school. As a result of emphasis on outdoor learning forest school leads to more opportunities for pupils to experience a greater understanding of the natural world. Often the awe and wonder experienced during worship in the outside space along with the Celtic prayers used powerfully develops pupils' personal spirituality. Pupils articulate clearly their learning about Jesus and God, and the Holy Spirit is mentioned regularly in worship. Collective worship is monitored by the headteacher, and informally at present by governors. Improvements have been made such as after the Open the Book presentation church members now answer pupils' questions.

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

As a result of the school's local community within which there is limited diversity, the school mission of "expanding pupils' horizons" has been devised. The headteacher and staff articulate this vision as a Christian one of respecting all communities beyond their own and of working together to eliminate their needs. Pupils have made many positive contributions to others through their links with local and global schools and through their charitable giving. As a result of their outdoor work pupils learn the necessity and reward of caring for God's world. The executive headteacher with the effective support of the staff and governors effectively directs the Christian vision and values of the school both explicitly and implicitly ensuring that leaders and managers discuss and implement Christian values in policy and practice. The schools' strong association with the church is understood by the whole school community as a high priority distinctive feature. Pupils design a new large cross for their classroom each year. Church members and the vicar regularly lead worship. Pupils take advantage of the reflection stations in church at certain times of the year. The federation's new governing body are determined that the joint working of the two schools will not affect the maintenance and further developments of the school as a church school. The school has recently reviewed with the diocese personnel and all stakeholders their aims, values and core purpose and consequently the school has now embedded its values system and is well placed to maintain its church school distinctiveness. Religious education (RE) makes a strong contribution to the Christian character of the school emphasised by its high priority among core subjects and by the leadership undertaken by an enthusiastic and highly qualified member of staff. The foundation governors strategically planned the federation in order to ensure that more local children had access to high quality education. Staff have undertaken training related to leading collective worship and the new RE syllabus. The former deputy headteacher of Holywell is now Head of School. This allows additional Church school leadership within the new structure. All staff are fully committed to the school's expectation of their role in this Christian community. They feel highly appreciated for their work and are very supportive of each other both professionally and personally. The school has made good progress in achieving the development issues from the last church school inspection. Parents are very positive about the school and particularly appreciate the school's daily playground welcome and approachability of the headteacher and staff. The school has a positive relationship with the diocese using its personnel to help with CW and RE training and being asked by them to evaluate the new RE units and assessment. The school is viewed as the centre point of the village community and participates in many of its activities.

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