



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Waltham on the Wolds Church of England Primary School

Melton Road
Waltham on the Wolds
Melton Mowbray
LE14 4AJ

Previous SIAS grade: good
This inspection grade: good

Diocese: Leicester

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 30 January 2015

Date of last inspection: January 2010

School's unique reference number: 120170

Headteacher: Julie Hopkins

Inspector's name and number: Hilary Painter (817)

School context

Waltham on the Wolds CE Primary School is a small village school with 79 pupils on roll. It is in a predominantly affluent area and almost all the children are from a White British background. The number of pupils receiving support for special educational needs is above average, but is reducing due to effective intervention. The school became an academy within the Diocesan Leicester Academy Charity Trust (LACT) on 1 October 2014. Since the last SIAS inspection there have been compulsory redundancies to avoid a budget deficit, major staff movement and two changes of head. Since April 2014, the school has been led by an interim executive head, on site 2½ days a week. This arrangement is currently under review.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Waltham on the Wolds as a Church of England school are good

- Relationships throughout the school are of a high standard and reflect a Christian ethos.
- Collective worship is of a high quality, relevant to the pupils and followed up in the classroom.
- Governors have shown great commitment to the Christian ethos of the school in the work they have done to enable it to join LACT.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the outcomes of systematic monitoring lead directly to aspirational development planning as a church school.
- Ensure that the process of embedding the awareness of specific Christian values of the school underpins the planning, implementation and evaluation of policies.

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

The impact of implicit Christian values is apparent throughout the school, providing a safe, caring atmosphere in which all children can thrive and make above average progress. Parents say their children love coming to school. Attendance is well above the national average, attributable to Christian values such as tolerance, trust and friendship. These also contribute to thoughtfulness and good behaviour throughout the school. The Christian values of perseverance and endurance are encouraged by a well-developed system of rewards and sanctions, although they are not explicit within the behaviour policy. A recent development, arising from a point in the last SIAS report, has been the 'Owl Ministry', a school council. This has input into various aspects of school life and promotes the school's Christian values such as service, friendship and trust, for example, the organisation of charity collections. Achievement and service are celebrated within collective worship each Friday. Two years ago the school identified the explicit understanding of Christian values as an area to develop. Since November 2013, 'Messy Fiestas' have occurred termly, wherein the whole school spends time considering one Christian value in depth. So far, trust, friendship, hope and working together have been the focus and children can relate these to their personal relationships. Children speak enthusiastically about these sessions, mentioning especially the friendship bracelets they made and the time they trusted a precious object to someone else. Some pupils were able to make the link between these values and teaching from the Bible but generally they were unsure how values related to the teachings of other religions. The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities and visits, all of which contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Some visits and activities are whole-school events, which implicitly foster the Christian values of community, justice, compassion and service. Among these are fund-raising events and occasions when they join with the church and other groups within the village. Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth. Work is in progress to integrate RE within the whole school curriculum but, along with the other initiatives, has not yet had time to become firmly embedded into practice.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Collective worship is central to the school day and is much valued. Pupils say that collective worship is important to them as it '...helps us to understand things'. Staff, the head teacher, the incumbent and pupils lead worship on a regular basis and members of the church lead weekly 'Open the Book' sessions. Festivals such as Christmas, Candlemas, Easter and Harvest are celebrated in the parish church, as is the leavers' service, and are well attended by parents and the community. Parents value the opportunity to take part in the Friday worship, when achievement is celebrated. Worship is often based on Christian values such as tolerance, trust and friendship and the use of Bible passages to illustrate these is firmly rooted. Pupils have good knowledge of Anglican practice and are able to explain the concept of the Trinity, using the contents of the 'Worship Box'. In this, a Bible symbolises the word – God the Father, a cross symbolises Jesus, God the Son and a candle symbolises the Holy Spirit. A candle is lit to provide focus in worship and pupils talk readily about Jesus being the light of the world. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and their school prayer and write their own prayers, which are on display and used in worship. The spontaneous prayers said by several pupils in a time for reflection during the Candlemas service were impressive and showed an understanding of prayer as means of giving thanks to God and for asking for help. Older pupils organise their own assemblies on Christian themes. They involve younger children and use devices such as drama and computer technology to enhance the impact. Worship is monitored and evaluated by older pupils as well as the co-ordinator and governors. This has resulted in all having 'ownership' and has widened the range and scope of worship, providing a rich diversity of experiences, which enhance pupils' spiritual development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

From the previous inspection, the focus point relating to religious education has been addressed and the co-ordinator has spent time observing RE in other classes, although this has not always been possible due to budget restraints. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator has spent time talking to the other staff and the impact has been to raise the profile of the subject and has given the co-ordinator the opportunity to share knowledge and support other staff in an informal way. This they have welcomed. Progress is monitored effectively at the end of each teaching unit. Teaching is good and pupils' progress in RE is similar to that in other core subjects, which is in the top third when compared with similar schools. The main focus is on Christianity and the school uses the locally agreed syllabus, 'Harmony and Diversity', which enables them to learn about and from religion. Pupils are enthusiastic about RE lessons and the older pupils in particular take an active and articulate role by reflecting on lesson content, discussing the impact and interpreting how it applies to their own lives. The school has International Foundation School status and has had links with schools in Nepal and the USA. These links have added to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, in the case of Nepal, added to their knowledge of other faiths. Work is in progress to link RE within the whole school curriculum, ensuring Christian values are made explicit, but this is not yet firmly embedded.

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

Leaders are committed to the Christian ethos of the school and this benefits the pupils in both their academic and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As policies come up for review, evidence from working documents show that links with specific Christian values are becoming clearer but, as yet, they are not firmly embedded. The 'Messy Fiesta' programme, begun in November 2013, aims to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the distinctive Christian element of the school's values. Parents say their children talk about these sessions, which also involve church members. A committee has been set up to monitor and evaluate the distinctiveness of Waltham as a church school and again, it is evident from working documents that the school's Christian vision is being included in its planning and policies as they come up for review but the process is not yet complete. Governors and staff have taken opportunities for training and development. This has resulted in one member of staff moving on to take a senior position in another school and minutes show governors gaining confidence in their role as they become more aware of church school distinctiveness. Parents are welcome in school and comment that they feel part of the school's Christian family. There are effective partnerships with the church and the local community. The incumbent and church members are actively supportive as governors and leaders of worship. The school values its links with the diocese and via LACT and the head teacher is a committed and active member of various local school groups, raising the profile of Church schools. She is also executive head of another school in the Vale, which is beginning to bring benefits to staff and pupils from the sharing of good practice. Statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship are met. Issues for development from the previous inspection have been largely addressed, although budget constraints limited the observations of RE for a time.