



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **St Edmunds Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School and Foundation Unit**

Church Hill Avenue  
Mansfield Woodhouse  
Nottinghamshire  
NI9 9JU

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Southwell and Nottingham

Local authority: Nottinghamshire

Date of inspection: 19 June, 2015

Date of last inspection: 26 January, 2010

School's unique reference number: 112741

Headteacher: Nadeem Shah

Inspector's name and number: Kerry Palmer (60)

#### **School context**

St Edmunds is an average sized primary school. The number of children receiving pupil premium support or with special needs or disabilities is also average. Almost all children are of White British heritage. There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection including three headteachers. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2015. The long established school is now housed in a modern, well-appointed buildings with spacious grounds providing an excellent learning environment. The parish church is close by. The school has an established partnership with an outstanding church primary school led by a national leader in education.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Edmunds Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School and Foundation Unit as a Church of England school are good**

- Strong and effective school leadership which is driving the positive development of Christian distinctiveness.
- The appreciation of each child as a unique and special gift from God resulting in deep concern for wellbeing, enthusiastic, happy learners and rising standards.
- A committed religious education (RE) subject leader who supports colleagues in delivering challenging and enjoyable RE.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Clarify the school's understanding of Christian values so that they are explicitly expressed in teaching, collective worship and documentation.
- Establish a collective worship development group of key stakeholders to ensure the centrality of this vital facet of church school life.
- Develop a structure for effective stakeholder evaluation of collective worship in order to inform development planning.

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

Recently defined key Christian values are given high profile and are an increasingly central foundation for many aspirational curriculum and staff developments. However, the theological basis for Christian values is not embedded in documentation or teaching. St Edmunds is a stimulating and creative learning environment where progress and achievement is clearly improving. This is the result of the recognition of God given talent in all and a focus on perseverance. Relationships are positive and mutually supportive amongst children staff, parents and governors. 'We share Christian love,' one teacher commented. As a result, attendance is above average, behaviour good and there have been no exclusions. Children are hardworking and focussed, they say they are safe and look forward to coming to school. Policy and practice recognises unique gifts in every child. Committed and professional staff ensure that disadvantaged children make good progress and the more able are challenged with a rich array of enrichment and motivational activities; there are clubs trips and visits in abundance. Christian values of justice, forgiveness and respect successfully promote moral, social and cultural development. However, while reflection areas exist, thinking about spiritual development is unclear. Empathy for the less fortunate is evident in school council activities such as support for the local food bank and Red Nose Day. As expected in a church school, RE is predominantly Christian and contributes very positively to the school's Christian character. It also includes teaching that promotes children's understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures. Creative approaches to RE enhance spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, young children hearing the story of Noah responded with their own rainbow promises and older children considering the importance of water reflected on the privations of children lacking clean water in the developing world. However, appreciation of Christianity as a world-wide faith is limited.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**

Collective worship is recognised as important in the life of the school community and is valued by many. All teachers lead worship from time to time, though not all staff attend this gathering of the school family each day. Christian values based themes, effectively coordinated by the deputy headteacher, impact positively on moral and social development, as displayed in children's behaviour and relationships throughout the school. Class assemblies, to which families are invited, are popular and children play a full part in festival services held in St Edmunds' Church. However, there are insufficient occasions for children to plan and deliver worship week by week. Bible stories are a regular feature, but the centrality of the teaching and example of Jesus is insufficiently highlighted. Some worships have a liturgical framework and most include prayer. Children know the Lord's Prayer and why it is important, with many recognising Jesus as the Son of God. They also have an appropriate understating of the Trinity, including use of songs such as 'Spirit of God'. Opportunities for children to contribute prayers exist, but the school recognises further development is needed as does effective reflection time promoting spiritual development. There is much emphasis on sorry and thank you but little on praise. The vicar and Methodist youth worker regularly lead worship and support RE. The latter commented that children at St Edmunds have superior Bible knowledge and appreciation of Christianity than others of a similar age. Some evaluation has been undertaken, but there is an insufficiently structured consultation with stakeholders to usefully inform development planning.

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

The headteacher and leadership team give high profile to promoting key Christian values which are successfully modelled by staff. They are displayed throughout the school and guide development priorities. However, their theological foundation is not clearly articulated. The

many changes in school leadership since the last inspection have undoubtedly hindered the coherent development of Christian distinctiveness. Nonetheless, current Christian care for every child and good quality teaching is effectively driving up academic standards and fostering self-worth. Rigorous self-evaluation leads to focussed and relevant development priorities. Good use is made of professional development training and support, including those offered by the diocese. Staff are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities and 'grow' professionally. The RE subject leader works effectively in supporting whole school improvement and positive development. Much benefit has accrued from the partnership with an outstanding school. Governors are active and supportive, but do not effectively monitor Christian distinctiveness or contribute to the school's self-evaluation cycle. There are positive links with the parish and other local churches which are not currently fully exploited. Parents recognise the commitment and quality of staff and a recent questionnaire confirmed their support for the school's Christian ethos. 'We know the children are safe and do well' one commented. 'It's the feel of the place – a wonderful place to be,' said another. There are active links with the local community such as involvement in bulb planting, the community orchard and singing in the local supermarket. Arrangements for collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements and the potential for further improvement is good.

SIAMS report   June 2015   St Edmunds CE (VC) Primary School, Notts. NG19 9JU