



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **Stradbroke Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Queen Street  
Stradbroke  
Eye  
Suffolk  
IP21 5HH

**Previous SIAMS grade: outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: outstanding**

**Diocese: St Edmundsbury & Ipswich**

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016

School's unique reference number: 124742

Headteacher: Melanie Barrow

Inspector's name and number: Juliet Corbett; Quality assurance: Neville Norcross NS 403

#### **School context**

This rural school of 92 pupils serves a predominantly white British community in the expanding rural community of the village of Stradbroke. The school entered into a collaboration with Laxfield Church of England (CofE) Primary in April 2014 and federated in September 2015. The executive headteacher has been in post for 8 years. The head of school retired in December 2015 and the new head of school began her post in January 2016. 10% of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium which is additional funding for pupils who receive free school meals.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stradbroke Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The distinctive Christian ethos, supported and upheld by the school leaders and strong partnerships with the church, enables all pupils to achieve well in both their academic and their personal development
- Christian values are embedded in the culture of the school and bring positive benefits for teaching, learning and well-being through the care and respect for each individual
- Inspirational leadership by the headteacher drives the Christian principles which are at the heart of outstanding relationships and behaviour

#### **Areas to improve**

- Provide more structured opportunities for guided personal reflection for pupils, enabling them to explore further the journey of their individual spiritual development
- Develop opportunities for prayer across the school, as well as through daily worship so that pupils gain a greater understanding of its purpose and the part it can play in their lives

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

Pupils say that the most important thing the school believes is, 'keeping children happy' because 'God would want us to treat others well'. The school community has a culture of caring, respect and kindness rooted in the embedded Christian ethos. Staff, pupils and governors understand and articulate how Christian values are woven into the wider curriculum, collective worship and the behaviour management policy. Progress and attainment are good because pupils feel safe and confident due to the quality of teaching and the attention paid to the needs of each child as an individual. Vulnerable pupils are helped to overcome barriers because of the executive headteacher's shared belief in trying to understand 'what it is like to be you'. Exclusions are very rare and behaviour is outstanding due to a high level of individual care, respect and encouragement. Pupils understand how their behaviour is linked to the school's Christian values. 'Values are like a book in the back of your head to refer to'. They are able to relate these values to the Bible and the life and teaching of Jesus. The Christian value of hope was expressed as, 'waiting for the person God promised' and forgiveness, kindness and friendship were linked to the story of the Good Samaritan. Religious Education (RE) makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the school's Christian character. The children described RE as an opportunity to 'stop and think about different options'. The quality of the task-setting in RE challenges children's thinking and promotes their spiritual development. The pupils explored the life of Jesus through a reflective labyrinth day with the diocese. Staff commented on the powerful impact it made and it will continue as a valued part of the curriculum. Children were eager to talk about the on-going Easter display in the entrance hall although wider opportunities for spiritual development through inter-active displays are less evident. The children emphasised the importance of respect and tolerance for different beliefs and cultures because, 'you have to work together and welcome each other's ideas'.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Worship is well planned around half termly Christian values and the church calendar. Staff and pupils worship together daily in school and special services take place in church, to which parents are invited. These include the Leavers' Service, when Year 6 children are presented with a Bible, Christingle and harvest, which extended into a farmers market in school. They thoroughly enjoy planning and taking part in these services and say that they would like to do more of this in school. Worship is delivered by a variety of leaders with differing styles, including all staff, two Baptist pastors and the incumbent, as well as the monthly Open the Book team. Governors commented on 'inspirational Bible stories' which open the children's minds and get them thinking and the powerful effect of simple prayers and sign language. Pupils enjoy worship, particularly drama, singing and celebrating each other's achievements on Fridays with certificates for those children who have demonstrated the Christian values during the week. They expressed that worship is a time to 'think about God' and 'embed our morals to follow your life by'. They articulated how Bible stories help Christians to understand the importance of the values of forgiveness and trust because Jesus needed to trust his disciples 'not to forget him' and was able to forgive Peter for betraying him. One pupil spoke about the 'special' significance of the worship candle because it 'reminds us that Jesus is with us and how much he loves us'. The daily act of worship provides opportunities for children to pray. The children respond to this with reverence, although opportunities for private prayer across the life of the school are less frequent. They were unclear, for example, about the purpose of reflection areas in classrooms and the library, describing them as 'quiet areas' or 'a place to get stuck into a good book'. Children's understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not well developed. Worship is evaluated by the children through their assembly reflection book and monitored by

staff and the co-ordinator. These evaluations are used to establish priorities for development in order that the quality of worship can be maintained and developed.

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

The executive headteacher is the inspiration for the school's explicit Christian vision. She is committed to the view that, 'everybody is as important as yourself'. Vulnerable children make good progress because care is taken to regularly review their provision maps and personalised learning plans. Staff and governors carry and articulate the expectation of a high level of care and well-being for the children and each other. Relationships between staff are strong and supportive, with a shared responsibility and commitment to the Christian ethos. During the Autumn term when the executive headteacher was working at Laxfield, staff capably upheld the school's high standards in her absence. Parents see teachers as approachable, caring and friendly and pupils say, 'teachers are amazing'. Governors, and more recently, the ethos committee, view themselves as strategic partners in the life of both schools in the federation. The governors' ethos committee, which now operates across both schools in the federation has developed a clear strategy for maintaining Stradbroke's distinctiveness as a church school. As a result of this, they have ensured that the school meets statutory requirements for RE and worship and that church school issues are always given a high priority. Governors are aware that the school's website does not currently do justice to the school's Christian ethos and vision. The partnership with the church is very strong. Baptist and Anglican clergy now maintain a high profile in the school community by leading regular worship. The Open the Book worship scheme, led by a group from the local church, takes place once a month. This not only enhances the mutually beneficial links between church and school but also reinforces children's understanding of important Biblical stories. The Baptist church runs a regular holiday club and the special Anglican church services are popular with children and parents. The church supports those children with a social and economic disadvantage by providing funding for school trips and clothing. An area to develop from the last inspection was to find creative ways of developing the school's Christian character. These partnerships with the local and wider church have been significant in enabling the school to meet this target. Leadership of RE is given a high priority. The Co-ordinator has introduced some effective initiatives during her short time in this post. She has been encouraged to attend regular RE development meetings in order that she can be well equipped to carry out her role. Newly qualified teachers receive training which ensures that they understand the link between RE and the school's values. This and other training opportunities have enabled the school to address the other area to improve from the last inspection – to provide further opportunities for professional development in relation to the school's ethos and foundation.

SIAMS report February 2016 Stradbroke CE VC Primary Suffolk IP21 5HH