



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The Methodist Church

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Eastry Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cooks Lea
Eastry
Kent CT13 0LR

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 29th September 2014

Date of last inspection: 10th November 2009

School's unique reference number: 118685

Headteacher: Mr Tim Halling

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Elizabeth Pettersen 557

School context

Eastry Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a village school that serves the local community. It is a one form entry school with 204 pupils. On entry pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and receiving Pupil Premium is below national average. Most pupils are of white British background. Attainment and pupil progress is above national average in Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Eastry Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Established strengths:

- Strong interpersonal relationships are founded on Christian values of care and respect for each individual.
- Acts of Worship involving all members of the school community are engaging and are a celebration of praise placing the person of Jesus at the centre.
- The leadership and management, particularly of the Headteacher, sustains a nurturing Church school ethos where there is a focus on high attainment and progress for all pupils.

Areas to improve

- Governors and staff to review the Diocesan self-evaluation documents so that they fully reflect the strengths and characteristics of this Church school.
- Ensure that the achievement of learners in Religious Education matches that in other core subjects, utilising monitoring strategies including book scrutiny and lesson observation.
- Develop a system to track pupil progress in Religious Education.

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

It is the strong relationships centred on the key Christian values of respect, compassion and care between all members of the school community that mark Eastry as an outstanding Church

school. Pupils describe their school as being ‘respectful, caring, loving and kind’. This view is shared by Governors who recognise that this “happy, friendly and respectful” school enables all pupils to be nurtured as individuals and thrive academically. School data shows that pupils attain in English and mathematics at a level that is higher than local and national achievement. The school prospectus highlights the value of compassion which is demonstrated clearly in the weekly staff briefing. At this time any concerns about pupils are shared with all staff to enable each child to be cared for in an individual way. Staff compassion was illustrated during the inspection when there was a time of quiet and personal reflection to pray for particular family concerns of that day. Pupils show their friendship and trust in each other on the playground where all ages integrate and play together. The School Council recognise that their school fosters good friendships and that if they are worried or anxious their friends as much as the adults in school will help them. They also know that the ability to forgive and forget is a core element of their friendship. Care for your neighbour is further demonstrated in the teaming up of Year 5 pupils with pupils in Fledglings class which continues as pupils enter in to Year 6 and Year 1. This ensures that new pupils to the school have a special friend and feel welcomed to the school. The school demonstrates care for others beyond the school in a range of charitable giving including supporting a child in Mali. The school’s calm environment promotes pupil’s spiritual development. Bright and engaging displays of pupil work enrich the learning spaces. Posters helping all in the community to reflect on personal attitudes to learning and life reinforce the development of character alongside academic performance. A variety of lunchtime clubs including chess, eco team, football and board games develop pupils’ awareness of feeling cared and valued during the school day. Religious Education lessons assist pupils’ spiritual development; for example a lesson on the Hindu God Shiva helped pupils to reflect on different emotions resulting in some sophisticated vocabulary choices and saw pupils challenging each other to be adventurous in their thinking. The teaching of RE supports pupils’ ability to reflect thus enriching their spiritual development. Parents recognise that they are welcomed to the school and are seen as key partners in their child’s learning.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The Act of Worship is a central part of the school day and one that all staff members attend. There is an air of expectancy and excitement as pupils enter the school hall. Pupils state that they enjoy this time of celebration and praise that bonds them together as a school community. The presence of an altar, a cross and candles, as well as the use of Bible stories and liturgical statements that require a response, show the Anglican traditions clearly in Worship. Pupils are fully involved in all aspects of the Worship: setting up the hall in advance, managing the laptop and taking an active part in storytelling. Music enriches the worship with pupils playing in an ensemble as the school enters the hall. During the inspection pupils sang spiritual songs from memory as they arrived in the hall. These were matched to meet the mood of the hall, initially being lively and then more gentle and reflective as the time for Worship arrived. The pupils later sang a song that had been written by a teacher with the words, “Side by side us two, Jesus me and you”. These words reflect the ethos of the school. Enthusiastic singing is a strength of the worship. During the inspection the focus on the story of Adam and Eve illustrated the Bible base for Worship. Pupils’ enjoyment and participation in the Worship was enhanced by their involvement in the delivery of the story in that a selection of pupils sampled different apples from a variety of sources. The theme was linked to Harvest, one of several key festivals that the school celebrates together with Christmas and Easter. Pupils are aware of the festival of Pentecost and have some understanding of the Trinity. The school holds services in the local church six times a year. These are led by the pupils and attended by the majority of families. The drawing together of the school community in this way reinforces the value of Worship for all. Once a week Worship is led by local clergy are seen as valued members of the school community. Pupils have an opportunity to contribute to the planning and leadership of Worship through their regular Class Worship. They also discuss worship in School Council meetings where they have stated that they enjoy the singing and stories about Jesus best. Within the Worship there is a time for quiet and reflection enabling

pupils to consider the theme of the day. Throughout the school and grounds there are further opportunities for pupils to reflect and be quiet. For example a corner with a collage showing the fifth day of creation also acts as a store and display area for Bibles; there are shelters on the school field, a Willow Dome to remember a former caretaker and prayer corners in each classroom. Within the prayer corners pupils are encouraged to pray for the world and others. In this way opportunities to be nurtured spiritually are integral to pupil development. Other services involving the wider community have included a ‘Walking Nativity’. This procession started at the church and travelled through Eastry, pupils knocking on doors and finishing at the local Inn. This has helped draw the local community in to the Christian life of the school. The development point from the last inspection to involve pupils and governors in the regular evaluation of collective worship has been put in place, but largely on an informal basis. The school is aware that a more formal and regular method of recording evaluations is the next step.

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

The Headteacher and supportive Governing Body share a clear vision for Eastry where the individual is valued. Governors ask challenging questions and hold the school to account during meetings. As a result outstanding attainment has been sustained in English and mathematics with all pupils, whatever their need, having made progress. Support staff have been deployed effectively to support all vulnerable groups. The Family Liaison Officer fulfils a key role in supporting families and pupils in the school. The importance of her role is reflected in the current construction of a Family Liaison room at the centre of the school building. Governors have been involved in school self-evaluation in preparation for an Ofsted inspection. They need to be more involved in the evaluation of Eastry as a Church school so that the Diocesan documentation truly reflects the school’s strengths. The school is part of the Sandwich Primary Consortium. Through this teaching staff have shared best practice with other schools enhancing professional development. A review of the membership of the Senior Leadership Team in the past year enabled more staff to experience school leadership. The school has a close link with the parish church and clergy are welcome visitors to the school. Pupils visit the church for services and as part of their RE work. They are enthusiastic about RE and appreciate the variety of activities including role play, drama, visual images, and particularly enjoy Bible stories. Specific RE days have been a special highlight of the teaching. However, there is inconsistent practice through the school. Where there is best practice pupils are challenged in their thinking and recording and marking is developmental. The RE leader is enthusiastic to develop the subject. She has a budget for RE and has purchased resources as needed for each year group. At present book scrutiny and lesson observation have been limited; as a result weaknesses in teaching have not been addressed. Some topic end assessment has taken place, but there is no tracking of progress in RE. Governors are keen to work with the school to raise the level of attainment in RE. The focus for development in the last Section 48 inspection to ensure that development points identified in the self-evaluation process are incorporated into the school improvement plan has been put in place. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and Collective Worship.