



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Gayton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Bugbrooke Road
Gayton
Northampton
NN7 3EU

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire

Date of inspection: 10 June 2015

Date of last inspection: July 2010

School's unique reference number: 121971

Headteacher: Celia Irwin (Executive Headteacher)

Inspector's name and number: Revd Douglas Spenceley 368

School context

Gayton is a very small rural primary school of 51 pupils, situated between Northampton and Towcester. Nearly half of the pupils live in the village, the remainder coming from surrounding villages. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is only a small proportion of pupils who have learning and/or physical difficulties. Significant personnel changes in the last two years have included the appointment of an interim executive headteacher, a head of teaching and learning, a class teacher and several governors.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Gayton Voluntary Controlled Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The strong Christian vision of school leaders and governors has contributed significantly to the recent rapid improvements in the school's performance.
- The school practises being a true Christian family in all its relationships and activities. This is substantiated by all members of the school community.
- The effective links with the local church and the community enable pupils to progress well in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

Areas to improve

- Adopt a planned, regular, cyclical approach to monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school.
- Embed into the planning and delivery of the curriculum a methodology which embraces a Christian understanding of life, such as the What If Learning approach.

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

The re-envisioned Christian character and values have brought significant benefits to pupils' progress and attainment during the last two years. These are now good. The many Christian symbols blend easily with the bright displays around the public areas of the school. They include biblical quotations relating to the values. The school website presents a clear indication of the school's Christian values and vision. They attest to the Christian family atmosphere which is evident in all aspects of the school. Parents appreciate how their children develop a confident and secure moral and spiritual compass for when they leave the school. Attendance is good; relationships and attitudes are exemplary. Pupils are challenged always to strive to do their best. They model the principles 'at all times to "search for the person inside yourself"' and have made increasing progress in their SMSC development. Application of what they learn about Christianity and other religions in their RE lessons has also caused them to reflect seriously on the role faith plays in their lives. For example, older children have worked incisively through a comparison between the work of Christian Aid and Islamic Relief, and the Christian and Muslim theological principles of giving. Pupils articulate with confidence how they apply what they learn from religious education (RE) and worship into their attitudes and learning behaviours. They attach importance to looking after each other and helping others, especially those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils have been inspired to support a range of local and international charities. They hope their initial fundraising to support a community and school in Bungoma, Kenya will lead to a more active link for the exchange of information and friendship.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils thoroughly enjoy collective worship and are eager to participate in all aspects. They particularly like acting out Bible stories and singing. Parents and teachers comment on the respectful behaviour of pupils during this special time. Pupils develop increasingly deeper spiritual and moral insights through their daily worship. They are stimulated also by the variety of visitors who lead worship, especially the fortnightly worship led by the parish priest. Worship offers times for reflection, prayer, simple liturgy, spiritual teaching and singing. A strong biblical and Christian foundation underpins the content and links clearly to pupils' SMSC development. Pupils see worship as a time when 'we learn about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit'. They confidently recall how what they learn in worship relates to the school's Christian values. This has an excellent impact on their day-to-day attitudes and behaviour. Their knowledge of Jesus' parables is wide and they are developing a mature understanding of their meaning. Pupils discuss openly how the Bible shows that in God's eyes we are all special, that Jesus is the Son of God - 'The stories of Jesus help me to be a better person.' They have a growing understanding of basic theological concepts. Pupils have a good grasp of the nature of prayer. They show deep concern for others, for God's world, for the sacrifice of Jesus. Pupils see prayer as talking to God, as bringing to God their own needs and hopes. Helping others, especially those you might not like, is a high priority for pupils. Services in church at key festival times and the end of year are well planned. Pupils are careful in their preparations to respect and be faithful to the story and impact of the life of Jesus. The many families and members of the community who support these services speak highly of the children's growing understanding of the meaning of key Christian festivals. Collective worship is not yet outstanding because, although formal monitoring takes place, it does not evaluate the impact of worship in sufficient depth to inform future development. Neither is it sufficiently embedded into the cycle of planned monitoring of the school as a church school.

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

The school has undergone significant change in the last two years following the decision to appoint an interim executive headteacher and a head of teaching and learning. They have steered the school through a demanding period of development, inspired by the Christian ethos. High expectations and sensitive pastoral care for staff are evident. Leaders promote the school's

Christian vision effectively. Christian values are 'the springboard for the working of the school, from which the teaching and care of the pupils happens. It's the foundation of everything we do.' The whole school community has shared in the development of the school's vision and the choice of Christian values. Many recently appointed governors are new to governance of a church school. With the guidance of their more experienced governor colleagues, the governing body supports and challenges the headteacher and staff about the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because a regular cycle of monitoring is not sufficiently embedded to inform over time church school development. Staff feel they receive good support from leaders, with opportunities to attend training in aspects of being a church school. This includes training to support the teaching of RE, which is cascaded to other staff. The school meets statutory arrangements for RE and collective worship. Staff have been inspired by and are introducing the What If Learning approach to planning and delivering the curriculum. This embraces a Christian understanding of life. All these changes are having a positive impact on the school's performance, with good outcomes in pupils' progress and attainment. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. All development points from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The school continues to be involved in many local and international community activities and charitable causes. Links with the parish church of St Mary the Virgin and the diocese are strong. Parents are vocal in their praise for the school. Many parents make positive choices for their children to attend the school because of its Christian values.

SIAMS report June 2015 Gayton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, NN7 3EU