

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Coton-in-the-Elms Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Elmslea Avenue, Coton-in-the-Elms, Swadlincote Derbyshire DE12 8HE

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Derby</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Derbyshire
Date of inspection	2 February 2017
Date of last inspection	17 January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	112812
Headteacher	Lee Smith
Inspector's name and number	Elizabeth Stanley-Wainwright 880

#### School context

Coton-in-the-Elms is a small, rural primary school. Over fifty percent of pupils attend from the surrounding areas, including neighbouring counties with the rest coming from the village. There are 117 pupils on roll across five mixed age classes. The school has excellent outdoor facilities and has good indoor space. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The headteacher has been in post since September 2015, alongside a new office manager since when the school has been through a period of staffing turbulence and transition. The school was Inspected by Ofsted in January 2017.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Coton-in-the-Elms as a Church of England school are outstanding

- A welcoming, inclusive church school which has strong relationships based on explicit Christian values.
- A distinctive church school which puts pupils at the heart of everything it achieves.
- The significant work in the development of collective worship makes an excellent contribution to pupil's spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.

#### Areas to improve

- Strengthen pupils' knowledge that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith.
- Involve pupils more in the planning and delivery of worship.
- Review policies and documentation to make the foundation and impact of the school's Christian values clear to all.

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

Coton-in-the-Elms is a welcoming, inclusive church school which has strong relationships based on Christian values. There is a newly shared vision by all members of the school community and this is evidently the golden thread throughout the school. The vision of PEACE has been unpicked and understood by all the community and is shared through a range of signage in school. Pupils confidently talk about what each letter in PEACE stands for and can share examples of how they embed these Christian values into school life and their own personal life. The school's Christian character provides pupils with a range of learning opportunities where they say that 'kindness is crucial in school in order for everyone work together'. The school has introduced a school parliament where ministers take an active role in school improvement to ensure the profile of the Christian character remains pivotal within school.

The pupils have an excellent knowledge of other faiths and a good concept of world religions. However, pupil's knowledge about Christianity across the world is still developing. The pupils have a natural care for each other which can be seen across school with older pupils supporting the younger pupils during lunchtime and playing together at breakfast club. There is a strong sense of family within school where everyone plays a vital role in ensuring safety and happiness of the whole school community. The school celebrates and recognises the different makeup of families within the community and ensure an inclusive approach, actively sharing that all are loved by everyone in the school and by God. Pupils are passionate about raising money for charities and will independently research and organise a range of activities to fund raise. Parents talk with great enthusiasm about the hard work put in by all staff to ensure that they know each individual child. This is highly praised by the regular invitations that parents have to come into school and take part in class workshops and to attend weekly worship. Parents value the Christian ethos and report that 'children are confident and happy to talk about God and celebrate their faith without worrying about what others might think'. Parents appreciate the strong links between school, church and home they feel that they are able to come and talk to any staff member about their child and to get support from the school community. Parents say 'this is a friendly supportive school, where the whole child thrives as an individual'. The Religious Education makes a significant contribution to pupils lives where they feel that they are able to ask big questions and have time to reflect effectively supporting spiritual, moral, cultural and social issues. The school recognises pupils as all God's children and through regular awards and praise the pupils which the parents say helps the pupils feel valued. The beautiful outdoor environment gives lots of opportunity to explore and reflect on the beauty and wonder of the natural world, contributing to their spiritual development and understanding.

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

Collective worship is of central importance within school and is carefully planned and delivered by the adults. Pupils and staff participate and use this opportunity to be together as a whole school, joining in the range of activities within the worship and value this time for personal reflection. The school uses a range of resources to support worship and ensures that it is engaging and gives pupils the time to reflect. Worship is relevant and interactive where all pupils recognise this as a special time in the school day. The school community all talk positively about collective worship and the impact upon pupils lives. Parents say 'our children come home and tell us the Bible stories that they have heard and will act them out'. The programme for collective worship is based on current affairs, learner's interest and Bible stories which Rev Janet skilfully works in partnership with the school to ensure there is a strong and relevant link. A variety of adults lead worship in school to ensure that it is meaningful, engaging and special. The pupils clearly value prayer and even the youngest pupils confidently talk about the Lord's prayer and recite the school prayer confidently. Prayer within school has been reviewed and all classroom have a space where pupils can go and pray or have time to reflect. The main library area has been developed into a reflection space where pupils can sit and read Bibles, write down worries or respond to collective worship questions. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to respond to questions raised in collective worship and will actively follow up any concerns. The environment for collective worship is a calm and there is a focus area in the hall with a cross, Bible, a big question and candles. All this emphasises collective worship's important place in the school day and values personal reflection time for all pupils and staff. Pupils are encouraged to come into worship singing and pupils are chosen to light the candles at the start of worship with each candle representing a class and the whole school give the greeting of Peace to each other. The children are fully engaged in the worship and describe it as their own personal space. There is a clear understanding that the teaching of the Bible is reflected through mutual respect, caring relationships and good behaviour. Pupils talk with ease about their engagement within worship and that sometimes they use the time to think about their own lives or the lives of others, the adults also encourage children to share their thoughts either as a group or privately depending on the theme. Throughout worship two pupils have the responsibility to monitor the worship specifically looking at engagement this is fed back to staff at the end of the worship and used as part of the evaluation.

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

The headteacher's strong leadership celebrates the Christian vision and values and encourages the whole school community to do likewise. The headteacher's openness encourages enthusiasm, drive and involvement for all staff to maintain a strong focus on meeting the needs of all learners. The safety and well-being of all children and staff are of high importance in school and this can be seen by the relationships and the investment made by the headteacher for encouraging good mental health awareness for all staff. The visions and values are clearly set out on the school website and can be seen within the school, however, the excellent practice and importance placed on the Christian foundation is not yet evident in the documentation. Through solid partnerships the whole school community has a very clear understanding of the vision and this is lived out in the day to day life of school – in relationships, behaviour, lessons and at lunchtime. The leaders of the school have a good understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness. The self-evaluation shows what the school has already achieved and has clear steps

to continue ongoing improvements. The leadership and management of RE are in the early stages and the school is starting to develop a wider evidence base from which to evaluate standards. The school has invested in Diocesan training for collective worship which has raised the profile and given pupils a better understanding of why we worship. Governors are passionate about their school and talk with conviction about the importance of 'Christian values being the foundation to everything we do'. Relationships that governors have with staff is clearly based on mutual respect however, they do hold the headteacher to account to ensure that they have accurate information about the progress and the journey that the school is on. Governors recognise that 'we don't just teach children to add up, we help to guide the whole child and that is what makes our school special.' The governors are fully involved in the strategic management of the school as a Church of England school and are regularly in school to work with pupils, monitor progress and development. The school has very strong links with Rev Janet and use the church building on a regular basis as an extension of school and to worship. Rev Janet is passionate about her role within school and is clear about how she provides guidance 'like a lighthouse' for the whole school community. The relationships between clergy, staff and pupils is open where pupils feel they would be able to speak to Rev Janet if they had a worry or issue. Rev Janet has invested a great deal of time to work with the pupils on their understanding of the Lord's Prayer and acknowledges that she still has work to complete on the pupils understanding of Trinity. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met and developmental issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Overall the leadership and management is highly effective in continuing to develop a distinctive and inclusive church school, with clear benefits for the whole school community.

SIAMS report February 2017 Coton-in-the-Elms VC Primary school, Elmslea Avenue Coton-in-the-Elms, Swadlincote Derbyshire DE12 8HE