

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Elton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street, Elton Matlock Derbyshire DE4 2BW

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Derby

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Derbyshire

Date of inspection

13 July 2017

Date of last inspection

25 May 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

112815

Headteacher

Paul Hunter

Inspector's name and number

Elizabeth Stanley-Wainwright 880

School context

Elton is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Pupils attend from the immediate surroundings there are 17 children on roll divided into 2 mixed age classes. All pupils are white British and the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is currently above the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The headteacher has been in role for eleven years. The school is adjacent to the Parish church, which is part of the Wirksworth Team Ministry.

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

- A welcoming, inclusive church school, which has strong relationships based on explicit Christian values.
- A distinctive small church school that puts pupils at the heart of everything.
- An inspirational, highly motivated headteacher who leads through Christian values drives the school vision.
- Strong partnerships with the parish promotes a Christian community in the village.

Areas to improve

- Create prayer space within classrooms and outside to provide a focus for all pupils.
- Formalise pupil's involvement in the planning and delivery of worship.
- Review website, 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

Elton is a small welcoming, inclusive church school which has strong relationships based on Christian values. There is an established vision shared by all members of the school community and this is evidently rooted and lived out throughout the school. The school's Christian character promotes achievement for all regardless of the pupils starting point. Rev'd Lorraine states, 'children achieve because of this school environment every child needs a constant and the school provides that constant'. The pupils have an excellent knowledge of other faiths and a good concept of world religions. Pupil's knowledge about Christianity across the world is still sound and they are confident to share their knowledge and understanding in articulate manner. The pupils have a natural care for each other, which can be seen across school with pupils supporting those with special educational needs during worship,

lunchtime and playing time. There is a strong sense of family within school where everyone plays a vital role in ensuring the happiness and wellbeing 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 talk about 'staff being like family members where they feel loved and valued for all the wonderful things they can do.' 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 perfect nurturing school where they feel they are leaving their children with family and that nothing is too much for any staff member.' The Religious Education (RE) makes a significant contribution to pupils' lives where they feel that they are able to ask questions, have time to reflect and also to carry out personal research. The school recognises pupils as all God's children and work extremely hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included regardless of their additional needs. Parents value the staff approach of 'can do' and say that all children are welcomed into the community and staff always go the extra mile to help with transition. In particular, parents describe the headteacher as someone who supports them as parents and always puts children first through his father figure approach to ensuring the best for all children in his care.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is of central importance within school and is 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. The programme for collective worship is mainly based on music and discussions where children happily sing and rejoice in song. This allows all children to take part regardless of their age. Pupils are confident to ask big questions within worship and listen intently to the answers. In addition, the area set aside for worship encourages children to use art as a stimulus to start worship and to choose favourite Bible stories and prayers. Rev'd Lorraine along with the other foundation governor work hard to ensure that children have a variety of worship opportunities and that the pupils know that worship not only happening in church but also in school and outdoors. Clergy have strong links with the pupils, staff and parents and actively support each other in a range of different ways such as; welcoming children who have additional needs or who have found life in other school challenging actively encouraging them to join the school to help support the whole child. The pupils clearly value prayer and show delight in being able to choose prayers for different purposes. Prayer within school is very strong and the pupils talk about why they pray and the impact that it has on the school family. The use of a prayer board has had a big impact upon the pupils as it has encouraged them to participate enabling them to visually see what, or who, they have prayed for during the week. 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 separate from classrooms and is calm and there is a cross, Bible and candles. All this emphasises collective worship's important place in the school day, which helps to focus pupils in between teaching time, and values personal reflection time for all pupils and staff. The pupils have a good understanding of Trinity and are able to articulate about what this means to them through discussion and questioning. The pupils are fully engaged in the worship and feel confident to participate. 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 pupils to share their thoughts either as a group or privately. Pupils give verbal feedback to the leader of worship as part of the evaluation process.

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

The headteacher's leadership celebrates and promotes the strong 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 visions and values are rooted within school. However, the excellent practice and importance placed on the Christian foundation is not yet evident on the school website and in the documentation. The whole school community has a very clear understanding of the vision and this is lived out in the daily life of school, in relationships, behaviour, lessons and at lunchtime. It is clear to see that the school holds the village together with its regular input into church life, social events and the welcoming of the community to school events throughout the year. 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 continue to develop as the school has invested in diocesan training for Understanding Christianity which is being shared amongst the cluster of local schools. The headteacher has been proactive to help plan, lead and evaluate a day on Pentecost where children

from cluster schools were able to come together for worship and reflection time. Events such as this have a big impact on the pupils at Elton, as they are able to gain a sense of who they are within a larger community. 'Messy church' is established within the setting and pupils have access to this on a regular basis, which they say 'they enjoy and look forward to'. The Governors have clear ideas of how to move the school forward, maintain number of children on roll and continue to embed Christian values as the foundations. Relationships that governors have with staff is based on mutual respect whilst holding the headteacher to account to ensure that they have accurate information about the progress and the journey of each child and the school as a whole. Governors recognise that 'the school is unique due to its size but also that each pupil is valued as a child of God'. 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'd Truby and use the church building on a regular basis as an extension of school and to worship. As the Rev'd says, 'ministry is offered to all children in school as we want our pupils to have a sense of belonging and cherish their spiritual lives as individuals'. Rev'd Truby is avid about his role within school and is clear about how the Christian character and ethos of this small community is appreciated and valued through spiritual support for the pupils and staff. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met and developmental issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. Overall the leadership and management is highly effective in continuing to develop a distinctive and inclusive church school, with clear benefits for this small community.

SIAMS report July 2017 Elton Church of England VC Primary School, Main Street, Elton, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 2BW