



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### North Elmham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Holt Road  
North Elmham  
Dereham, Norfolk  
NR20 5JS

#### Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk  
Date of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
Date of last inspection: 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008  
School's unique reference number: 121049  
Headteacher: Keith Wright  
Inspector's name and number: Vicki McHarrie - 578

#### School context

North Elmham is a small village school where pupils are taught in four mixed age classes. Parents from outside the catchment area choose the school for its Christian ethos. A federation has been formed with another primary school and the headteacher was appointed in September 2012 to lead both schools. St. Mary's parish church is situated a short distance from the school.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of North Elmham as a Church of England school are good

This is a very welcoming, inclusive school where a distinctive Christian ethos encourages pupils to respect and care for each other. The friendly, family atmosphere enables pupils to feel secure and to fulfil their potential. The leadership of the head and governors gives a strong, clear vision for the school as a church school.

#### Established strengths

- The effective teaching of Christian values that underpin and impact on all areas of school life.
- The caring nature of the school where all pupils are valued and nurtured.
- The leadership and vision of the headteacher to further develop North Elmham as a Church of England school.
- Very good liaison with the parish church, the village community and local faith groups

#### Focus for development

- As a matter of urgency fully address the developmental points raised during the previous inspection especially increasing the use of Christian symbols within the school building and the development of the outside quiet, reflection area.
- Ensure the church foundation of the school is explicitly included in all documentation.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to lead and be actively involved in collective worship.
- Plan a formal programme for the foundation governors to monitor and evaluate the distinctive nature of the school as a church school.

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

A clear Christian ethos underpins all aspects of school life. Each member of the school community is valued, enabling pupils to thrive in a happy, secure environment. Pupils love coming to school because 'everyone is kind and there's lots to do'. Playtimes are enjoyed by all and pupils know that if they have any problems an adult or friend will always help. They are polite and behave very well. Pupils speak about the importance of forgiving each other so that they can all remain friends.

The provision for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils are developing an awareness of the wider world and are enjoying learning about other faiths and cultures. They regularly support charities and speak sensitively about the importance of helping others who are less fortunate than themselves. The school effectively nurtures spiritual development through worship, RE and aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are confident to express their thoughts in a mature way. For example "Forgiveness should be forever - if not the world would be a sad place". An attractive 'Reflection Area' is being developed indoors and pupils like having a place where they can find peace and quiet. A good range of extra curricular activities are provided to suit a variety of interests. Relationships between all members of the school community are good and they all respect each other. Staff are consistent in their approach and uphold the Christian ethos. Good quality displays of pupils' work enhance the school environment and celebrate success.

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

Collective Worship plays an important role in the daily life of the school. The 'Values for Life' materials provide a core programme for worship and a range of approaches are used to gain the interest of pupils. Input is provided by teachers, members of the church community and visitors. Pupils have recently undertaken training to enable them to plan and lead worship. Pupils speak positively about worship and see it as 'a special time when we all come together to be quiet and share our thoughts'. They particularly enjoy singing hymns and feel it is a fun way to learn about Jesus. They are beginning to relate the Christian message to their own lives and speak thoughtfully about how they should consider the feelings of others. The act of worship observed was led by a group of pupils and illustrated the importance of forgiveness. Pupils were engaged, joining in the prayer and singing the hymn with enthusiasm and feeling. They speak sensitively about the value of prayer and of how 'Jesus can hear you and help you'. Pupils would like to be more actively involved in worship and would appreciate seeing a cross or candle in the hall to act as a focus and so help their reflections.

Pupils are developing a good understanding of Anglican tradition. They celebrate Christian festivals, learn about the Church calendar and regularly attend services in church. Parents are invited to join the school for church services and attendance levels are high.

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

The mission statement for the federation clearly states that the school will promote an ethos based on Christian values. The headteacher and deputy head have a clear understanding of how these values are promoted and taught to ensure a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes and actions. The foundation governors are actively involved in the life of the school, uphold the Christian vision and are very supportive. In the past few years there have been significant changes in the leadership team and this has contributed to limited progress being made in addressing the developmental issues from the previous inspection. The appointment of a permanent headteacher with a clear vision should enable the school to move forward. The head is well supported by a committed team who realise the important role they play in modelling Christian values.

Self-evaluation of the school as a church school is secure. A governor regularly monitors collective worship and is in a good position to further develop this role. The school's church foundation is only briefly mentioned in its documentation and Christian symbols are not evident in the building. Good links are in place with the diocese and valuable training has been provided for pupils and staff. A very good partnership with parents has been established. They appreciate the way in which pupils are taught Christian values and beliefs whilst being encouraged to question ideas.

The pupil voice is valued and the school council is actively involved in decision making. The school plays a strong role in village life with members of the community being invited to join the school for various events. The school values the very good support it receives from the Rector, the parish and local faith groups.

SIAS report March 2013. North Elmham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, North Elmham, Dereham. NR20 5JS