



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Elton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane
Elton
Peterborough
PE8 6RS

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire
Date of inspection: 12 October 2010
Dates of last inspection: 4 and 6 December 2007
School's unique reference number: 110847
Headteacher: Rebecca Richards
Inspector's name and number: Robert Miller 357

School context

The school is smaller than the average primary school. Around two thirds of the 91 pupils live within the catchment area. Most of the pupils come from White British families. The headteacher took up the post, on a permanent basis, one year ago. She has led the school through a transitional period that has seen new staff, including a deputy headteacher, chair of governors and vicar appointed. The school is in a period of consolidation.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Elton as a Church of England school are good

A strong Christian ethos is embedded in the life of this highly regarded Church of England school. Relationships within the school are exemplary and are characterised by Christian care and concern. An enriched curriculum provides opportunities for spiritual development.

Established strengths

- The distinctive Christian vision of the school's leadership.
- The spiritual development of learners, enhanced by the school environment.
- The manner in which worship develops pupil's understanding of Anglicanism.

Focus for development

- Strengthen the links between the school and the Parochial Church Council [PCC] in taking the school forward as a church school.
- Involve pupils in the planning stages of collective worship.

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

Elton is a happy, caring and inclusive school where the staff act as exemplary role models. The relationships with the children are based on Christian principles of mutual trust, love, honesty and understanding, which are mirrored in the school's mission statement. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are cared for in an excellent manner and supported, as they seek to fulfil their potential. Children say they are respected, valued and listened to by

staff. Pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development arises from the whole ethos of the school and from the commitment shown by each member of staff. Pupils develop an extremely good sense of right and wrong and their responsibilities in society. They are gaining an increasing insight into other cultures through good teaching of religious education [RE]. Visits to and speakers from other faiths places of worship remains an ongoing focus. These features, together with an inside school environment that contains stunning wall displays and Christian symbolism on every wall in the corridor present opportunities for pupils and staff alike to reflect on their lives, what it means to be a pupil in a church school, the wider world and higher matters. Parents speak highly of their children's Christian upbringing as a result of attending Elton school. One parent said, 'The difference between the care and Christian upbringing that this school provides compared with others in the locality is a no contest. Elton provides happiness, co-operation and inclusivity'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of collective worship, which are an important part of school life, take place in the hall. This space is converted into a special place by virtue of a Bible on a table, with a candle, cross and prayer situated on a nearby wall. This arrangement acts as a focal point for the children and they derive inspiration from it. Great care is taken to ensure that worship takes place in a well-organised and peaceful environment. One pupil said "*Collective worship gets us together to talk to God*". Praying at different times of the school day, as well as writing their own prayers, helps children to focus on Christian values and supporting and caring for each other. One pupil said, "*We are taught to look after one another*". They enjoy being able to take part in re-enactments of Gospel stories but as yet do not have the opportunity to be involved in the planning stages of worship. An annual eucharist service in the nearby parish church, together with regular sessions devoted to its explanation, develops pupils understanding of Anglican traditions and practice. Acts of collective worship make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, by encouraging them to reflect on the issues that have been discussed in religious education and other curriculum subjects. The newly appointed vicar has already become a regular visitor who leads worship in school, as well as assisting in RE lessons. The monitoring and evaluation of worship is performed well in an effort to raise the quality still further. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The quality of RE is good and pupils make good progress across each key stage. A knowledgeable subject co-ordinator ensures, through regular monitoring, that standards in the subject continue to improve and that pupils make good progress. The lesson observed was good with effective use of resources. The introduction of a cross curricular approach is enhancing pupils' experience of RE, inspiring staff and children. Pupils express enthusiasm for RE and are interested in exploring their own beliefs and those of others. One Year 6 pupil described a recent RE lesson as "*an education of what God means*". Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies which promote independent learning, experiential approaches and open-ended questioning. Reception stage children and pupils in Year 1, responded to the challenges of 'The church being a special place' with impressive maturity. Teachers are confident and aim to make RE lively, enjoyable and interesting. The impact of the support and professional development undertaken since the last inspection is evident. Strategies for assessing and recording progress in RE are developing well and the school is in a position to compare standards in RE with those in core subjects such as English. The school is driving up standards in RE, embedding the assessments procedures and continuing the nurturing programme of RE, especially for the younger children. This is ensuring a consistent experience for pupils and the tracking of their progress as they move through the school. Parents say their children come home excited having learnt about another faith and want to share the experience with them.

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

The high quality of the headteacher's leadership contributes to the school's continuous strive for improvement as a church school. She has a personal Christian faith that drives the school forward. She is held in high esteem by parents and pupils alike and the school enjoys strong partnerships with parents and the local community, including the local Methodist church. The headteacher promotes a clear Christian vision by being a good role model to the whole

school community. She leads by example in a quiet, unassuming but caring manner. She has secured an excellent team spirit among the staff members. The headteacher and governors have established clear systems that inform the school's good self-evaluation. Governors enjoy good relationships with the children and headteacher. Governors share the Christian vision for the school. However, the PCC members as well as other stakeholders are not sufficiently involved in the school's evaluation of its distinctive Christian character. The school is aware that if they were, the church profile would be raised still further. The close proximity of the parish church ensures it is a valuable learning resource as well as being used for all the major Christian festivals services, to which the local community and families are invited. Liaison with a school in Kenya via the internet ensures pupils are benefitting from links with the wider world. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Parents, speak highly of all that the school does to ensure their children flourish as individuals. The capacity for the school to improve is good.

SIAS report October 2010 Elton CEVA Primary School, Cambridgeshire PE8 6RS