



## The **Methodist Church**

### National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

#### **The Vine Inter-Church Primary school**

The Vines  
Upper Cambourne  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 6DY

#### **Diocese: Ely Diocese and the Methodist Church**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire  
Dates of inspection: 16 September 2010  
Date of last inspection: February 2007  
School's unique reference number: 134894  
Headteacher: Mrs Debbie Higham  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Marion Betts 220

#### **School context**

The Vine school has been open for 5 years and serves the growing community of the new settlement of Cambourne. During this time the pupil population has grown rapidly to the current roll of 385 pupils. New pupils of all ages join the school regularly throughout the year. There is a family centre on site which offers family and pupil support services. The church building, situated some distance from the school, was opened at the end of last year and serves all the Christian groups in the community.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Vine Inter-Church Primary School as a Church school are outstanding**

The Christian foundation is prominently featured around the school and firmly embedded in all the school's activities. It is demonstrated by the caring relationships between all members of the community which have Christian values at their heart. Pupils are valued as individuals and flourish in their personal development.

#### **Established strengths**

- The firm Christian foundation that underpins the whole life of the school.
- The vision and dynamic personal example of the headteacher
- The strong emphasis on the care and pastoral support of pupils and their families
- The very strong links between school and church

#### **Focus for development**

- More formal monitoring by the foundation governors of religious education, collective worship and church school ethos.

- Involve pupils in planning and leading their own acts of worship.
- Appoint and develop the knowledge and skills of a new RE subject leader

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

Pupils are proud of their school, praising the care of the staff who make lessons fun, listen to them and help with their problems. Pupils enjoy their school life and feel secure as part of the school family. They value the opportunities to undertake responsibilities and care for other pupils for example in mixed age teams used on special curriculum days, and as buddies. They appreciate their opinions being regularly sought. Diversity of pupils' faiths and cultures are celebrated.

Relationships and respect between all staff and children are very good and demonstrate the school's Christian context. The school's Christian values are explicitly linked to bible stories and the school prayer. The school is characterised by good teamwork, praise used effectively and a sense of positive well-being. Pupils' successes and achievements are regularly celebrated. They behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. The pastoral care of the school is very good with each child's needs known and catered for; one example being the provision of individual counselling. Parents are very happy with their children's care and experiences within school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Reflection opportunities are planned into curriculum learning. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and a strong concern for the needs of others demonstrated by their fund-raising for a variety of charities including a Christian blind mission in the Congo. The school environment encourages pupils' spiritual development well through attractive displays, many with a Christian theme. A courtyard for reflection opportunities has been designed by pupils and work is ongoing. The school promotes a warm, welcoming, inclusive and friendly atmosphere.

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

Collective worship is important in the school's life, demonstrated by the appreciation of pupils and staff for this whole school beginning of the day community time. Worship has a positive impact on pupils and promotes well their spiritual and moral development. During worship pupils listen well and are given a quiet reflective time to allow them to apply their learning to their own experiences. Staff appreciate the weekly staff reflection time.

Collective worship effectively includes high quality hymn singing, vibrant presentations that creatively motivate the pupils' interest, story often from the Bible, poetry, music and prayer with visual symbols and artefacts to aid understanding.

A number of different leaders, including the headteacher, governors, local minister, and other Christian visitors give pupils a broad experience of different styles of worship. Pupils have some opportunities to participate in delivering worship but would appreciate being given more responsibility for both planning and leading worship.

The school prayer which incorporates the values held by the school is known well and understood by the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to write their own prayers which are used in class at the end of the day and displayed in the prayer space. Pupils have some understanding of the purposes of prayer.

The school leadership at present monitors the impact of worship and pupils' views are sought. Foundation governors do not as yet formally monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship.

Worship develops well pupils' understanding of the Christian faith. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and Grace is said at lunchtime. The main Christian festivals and other special services are celebrated with parents and the new church building has been used for these.

**The effectiveness of the religious education(RE) is good**

RE is viewed by staff and pupils as an important subject and is often used as the main focus

for a topic. Its importance is demonstrated by the well planned lessons, the creative cross curricular links, the attractive displays of RE work and the spiritual reflection incorporated into learning. Pupils achieve well and have a good understanding of the Christian faith and knowledge of other faiths. Most pupils enjoy this subject especially when it has practical outcomes such as art, drama, poetry and ICT (Information and Communication Technology). For example the study of Ancient Egypt led to a dramatic presentation of the Jewish Passover with music, dance and pupil prepared food.

Teaching throughout the school is good and some outstanding features were observed. The school implements Cambridgeshire's Agreed Syllabus for RE. Teachers plan together, incorporating well both attainment targets and have sound subject knowledge. Pupils are engaged and motivated. Assessments of work link to the level descriptors from the syllabus.

RE makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development for example by giving pupils opportunities to reflect on "Big Questions" raised during the learning. Pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts, opinions and feelings.

The minister, other church members, pupils and parents from other faiths are used well as extra resources for learning. Visits to a variety of Christian buildings allow pupils to compare different worship traditions. Foundation governors are not at present involved with monitoring RE. Following the RE leader's departure no new subject leader has yet been appointed.

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

The inspiring leadership of the headteacher with the very effective support of the minister powerfully directs the Christian vision of the school. She personally set the tone of Christian care and concern for others throughout the school. The governors are pro-active and have been instrumental during the school's rapid growth in ensuring the maintenance and development of the distinctiveness of the school. The school vision is demonstrated to pupils practically through "The Vine backpack" which contains artefacts each linked to a Christian value or theme promoted by the school. The staff are strongly committed to the school's expectations of their roles in this Christian community. They feel appreciated for their work by the school leadership and are very supportive of each other both professionally and personally.

The church school status is explicit in all communications and the school badge. The foundation governors have recently undertaken training to gain more understanding of their role. The school's self-evaluation is reviewed regularly and development is included within the school development plan..

Links with the local church are very strong. The minister and church members support the school well. Positive partnerships with the diocese and the Methodist circuit have been established with visitors from each providing support and advice. Links with parents are very good and they appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and staff who listen and act on their concerns. The school has very effective links with the family centre and encourages families to use the facilities offered there. The school supports the local community very well, for example by providing Remembrance wreaths for this occasion. Pupils regularly visit the local residential home.