



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

**Edward Peake Church of England Middle School**  
**Potton Road**  
**Biggleswade**  
**SG18 0EJ**

**Diocese: St Albans**

Local authority: Central Bedfordshire

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> January and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Date of last inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009

School's unique reference number: 109694

Headteacher: Mandy Reddick

Inspector's name and number: Lilian Weatherley 42

### School context

Edward Peake Church of England Middle School is a smaller than average middle school. Pupil numbers are rising and plans are in place for an extensive building plan to cater for this growth. The school population has become more diverse since the last inspection and now has a growing number of pupils from faiths other than Christianity. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action and Pupil Premium are in line with national averages but the proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a statement of special education needs is well above the national average. The most recent Ofsted report July 2013 judged the school to be 'Good'.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Edward Peake as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian values education programme and its impact on pupil behaviour, learning and standards of achievement.
- The high profile given to prayer, worship and religious education and the significant impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- The effective strategies developed by leadership and management to monitor and evaluate the school's Christian character and the resulting benefits to pupils.
- The excellent relationships based on gospel values.

### Areas to improve

- Enhance the spiritual aspects of class worship with the help of diocesan training for staff.
- Engage and inspire pupils in religious education by embedding the new Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus and completing the accompanying schemes of work.
- Create more opportunities for learners to gain a deeper understanding of other faiths and cultures.
- Include the pupils' ideas for developing a place of worship and a sensory room for silence and reflection in the new building project.

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

Edward Peake is a church school underpinned by Christian gospel values, where pupils' wellbeing and achievement are paramount. The recent work on Christian values and their links to biblical teachings has had a significant impact in improving standards and ensuring that pupils make high levels of progress by year eight. The pupils have all embraced the school's focus on values. The behaviour policy based on love, respect, honesty and forgiveness has resulted in a significant improvement in behaviour. Behaviour is now exemplary and pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They are polite and courteous and there is a working atmosphere of mutual respect in class and around the school. Those interviewed say how much they enjoy school and their lessons. They speak with enthusiasm about the ways in which the values have become a central part of their learning. 'Our school is good because the values really inspire the school. We respect and care for each other' (year 5). 'I like the way we go through each month with different values; this helps us understand them in great depth' (year 8). The 'Values Ambassadors' are a key group of pupils. They speak with pride about the monthly values newsletter and the awards given to those pupils who follow the values. Relationships are excellent. Pupils say they feel safe and cared for and bullying is now a rare occurrence. They feel supported and appreciate the individual conferencing with staff, the buddy system and the values days where parents can join in their learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to RE but feel that it could be more exciting. The subject leader who was appointed in September 2013 is in the process of implementing the new Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus to include more challenging tasks and creative activities. Although spiritual, moral and social development is good and well planned into the curriculum, pupils' knowledge and understanding of diverse faiths and cultures is less secure. Pupils are currently confused in their understanding of faiths other than Christianity. The developing RE curriculum and school steel band link with a school in Tottenham are helping to address this, as are the proposed links with a Caribbean school and one in Spain. The school offers a wide selection of extra-curricular activities and community projects which are popular with pupils. The school community regularly join together to raise money for those less fortunate. Pupils were eager to talk about these events and the large amounts of money they raise for charity throughout the year. At the time of the inspection there was a Sport Relief 'Bake off' between staff and pupils. This was a fun event which epitomised the Christian ethos of the school and the charitable atmosphere which pervades it. The chair of governors said, 'Our mission statement is 'Live love and learn'. Our school now looks and feels like a church school'.

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

Collective Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school. Worship is well planned and all staff lead and attend worship. Pupils say that they enjoy worship, which is based on a combination of the diocesan 3 year lectionary worship plans and Christian values. Upper and lower school worship take place in an atmosphere of calm and reflection. Music plays an integral part and pupils sing with enthusiasm. Behaviour and pupil engagement are excellent. The pupils are proud to explain their colourful banners, produced to change the atmosphere in the gym where space is at a premium. The quality and pattern of class worship has improved significantly since the last inspection. However, the class worship observed lacked a special atmosphere for spiritual development and a clear division between the worship and the subsequent lesson. Pupils now devise presentations, plan and lead class worship. One pupil said, 'I enjoy the assemblies that we do. They help me with my confidence and understanding.' The school day is punctuated with regular opportunities for prayer and reflection. Pupils know the Grace, the Lord's Prayer and their own school prayer. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the church year and key Bible stories. When asked how they might help younger children understand the concept of Trinity they were eager to respond. 'I would tell them what the Trinity is; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – and explain that these are basically the three aspects of God. I would explain that other religions have a sort of Trinity too'. 'Tri means three (as in tricycle) – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is what people believe God is made up of'. Pupils value the times for worship; 'I like the fact that we come together as a school to celebrate and share our values.' They speak with enthusiasm about opportunities for prayer especially the 'Prayer Space' day. 'I really enjoyed it because it is quiet, peaceful and calm and reminded me of members of my family who have passed away'. The parish church of St Andrew has become central to the school's worship as it is large enough

to accommodate pupils and parents. It is used for all major events and Christian festivals. High quality, illustrated orders of service are produced and the senior leadership team ensures that these events are key religious and spiritual occasions. Regular surveys by the Christian Ethos Working Party (CEWP) reflect how much parents, staff and pupils enjoy these times when they can worship as a community. A noted highlight was when the school choir sang at the Harvest Festival for the church congregation. The excellent staff survey shows how much the staff appreciate the benefits of attending and leading collective worship and how much it 'has helped with class discussions giving a common language to use with pupils'. Pupils learn about the Eucharist in RE but the CEWP and governing body are still discussing how to introduce Eucharistic worship.

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

The school has made significant progress since the last SIAS inspection. The Christian values programme has given the whole school community direction. The headteacher and governing body have a clear vision for the future of the school as a church school with a distinctive Christian character. Supported by the CEWP, they have ensured that all leaders are able to articulate and promote this vision. All meetings, policies and areas of the curriculum are now underpinned by Christian principles and values, with RE, prayer and worship of prime importance. All those interviewed were eager to praise the ways in which the school has developed since the last SIAS inspection but remain concerned how they might retain the 'lovely family atmosphere of the school' as it grows. Effective self-evaluation and monitoring lie at the heart of school progress. Pupils, parents, staff and governors are regularly surveyed about the school's Christian character and the findings are acted upon to increase the pace of change. This has enabled all staff to gain greater insight into what it means to be a leader in a church school. All are proud of the school's progress. Governors know the school well and are regular visitors. They demonstrate ownership of the school's progress as a church school and are eager to bring about continued improvement. Much has already been put in place to address the issues of the recent Ofsted inspection. Attendance has improved and the greater liaison with the feeder schools through the 'Biggleswade Community Union of Schools' is helping to address the gaps in prior learning and attainment in year 5. The school has implemented testing on entry and staff are more rigorous in their planning to ensure tasks match ability levels. The soft federation with Northill Church of England Lower School is also having a positive impact on pupil progress. The shared gospel values and governor/staff liaison have given both communities a secure Christian foundation from which to grow. Links with the Diocese and local churches are good. The Baptist minister leads 'Rock Solid', a popular Friday lunch-time club. The parish clergy support the CEWP and are regular visitors to the school.

SIAMS report March 2014 Edward Peake C of E Middle School, Potton Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0EJ