



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Codicote Church of England Primary School

Meadow Way, Codicote, Hitchin SG4 8YL

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority: Hertfordshire

Dates of inspection: 9 December 2014

Date of last inspection: July 2009

School's unique reference number: 117392

Headteacher: Liz Pollard

Inspector's name and number: Lilian Weatherley 42

School context

Codicote Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is an average size primary school with 223 pupils on roll. There is also an attached nursery with ten pupils but this will rise to 27 in January. The school serves the local community of Codicote and the Parish of St Giles. Although the majority of pupils come from the local community there is an increasing number from outside the catchment area. The school is a member of the Hitchin partnership of schools and the headteacher is an accredited learning partner. The large majority of the pupils are white British and the proportion of pupils who are disabled, receive additional funding through the pupil premium or have special educational needs is below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Codicote C of E Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The school motto 'Everyone will know success' is truly lived out and supported by a clear set of Christian beliefs and principles
- Supported by the school's distinctive Christian character, achievement is high and all pupils make excellent progress
- The dedication and commitment of an outstanding staff team ensures all pupils receive the highest levels of education, care and well being, underpinned by Christian values
- There is a high profile given to prayer, worship and religious education which has a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the school's website truly reflects the outstanding Christian character of Codicote School
- Use St Giles Church to display pupils' work to raise parish awareness of the quality of the work and the distinctive nature of their church school
- Ensure that the governing body seeks additional diocesan support to enable them to represent the school's Christian character in any development of the school with the proposed expansion of Codicote village

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

Codicote Church of England school is truly a school at the heart of the community. It has a clear set of aims based on Christian values and principles and in 2013 was judged by Ofsted to be an 'outstanding' school. Standards of achievement are high and pupils make excellent progress from the nursery to year 6. The three key school values of 'Love, Forgiveness and Trust' as well as other Christian values underpin relationships and help create a warm, inclusive, family environment. As a result, pupil behaviour and attendance are outstanding. This is 'a place where the pupils want to be'. Relationships between pupils, staff, parents and the wider community are excellent. Parents and grandparents regularly support teachers and pupils in the classrooms and old students return to carry out work experience. One parent said, 'This is a fantastic church school, the school motto 'Everyone will know success' is followed. Our pupils achieve in different areas and they are all given an opportunity to shine'. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are exceptional. The 'wow' activity days ensure pupils benefit from a range of stimulating ideas. All staff are a dedicated team that have high expectations. They demonstrate an understanding of the true Biblical meaning of the word inspire and ensure pupils are inspired by creative teaching in an inspirational learning environment. From the representation of the field of poppies in the playground to the clay tiles depicting the Christmas story high quality work is celebrated through vibrant displays. Pupils are happy, love their school and enjoy learning. Local, national and international events and issues are all used and integrated to stimulate pupils' interest in their community and the wider world. Pupils 'have fun', feel safe and are valued and supported. Comments such as 'It's brilliant', 'We learn a lot from lessons and still manage to have lots of fun' and 'We are taught in a fun way and we are allowed to be creative and adventurous'. 'Each one of the staff cares for every child. The teachers appreciate people who don't always believe in God and people with other religions'. Pupils trust their teachers and the teachers trust the pupils. Pupil voice is strong and independence encouraged. Older pupils have a significant impact on the school, taking responsibility for its smooth running and for the care and nurture of the younger pupils and the school pets. They look after the school office at break and lunchtimes, and support the reception class playtimes. Governors who attend school council meetings speak highly of the ways in which the pupils reflect Christian values and know that their views are listened to and will be acted upon if at all possible. The recent request for a zip wire in the playground is currently being considered and the idea of a carousel to raise money proved to be a great success. Religious education has a high profile in the school and standards are judged to be as high as in any other subject area. RE offers a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development with pupils studying all six major world faiths. Pupils were eager to talk about the whole school trip to a Mandir Temple in London and point out that 'it will be Hanukkah next week'. Pupils have also extended their knowledge and understanding of the wider Christian church through staff links with Cambodia and Costa Rica where they have sent Bibles and toothbrushes. Pupils benefit from being regarded as partners in this school. They are given choices and then trusted to make good decisions. For example, pupils explained how they choose the charities to support. They have held a Purple Day for the Epilepsy Society, supported Hospital Mercy ships, local food banks for Harvest Festival as well regular charities such as Red Nose Day.

The provision of opportunities to develop learning in the natural world, including the Forest School programme and the residential visits to Hudnall Park and Cuffley Camp promote an understanding and appreciation of creation and a need for stewardship of the earth. Members of the Eco Team explained how they are planning towards a 'Green Flag Award'.

When asked to write down anything they would like to change about the school the majority of the pupils wrote 'Nothing'. One said, 'I cannot think of anything because it's a great school'. One parent commented, 'Having researched extensively for fifteen months, I don't think I could have chosen a better primary school for my children. This school has exceeded all my expectations'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Statutory requirements for collective worship are met and worship has a high profile in the school. Pupils benefit from careful planning for worship. There is a tight framework within which the key elements of the Anglican tradition, Christian concepts and values such as wisdom and humility are taught. Pupils, staff, governors and parents all contribute to a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation. All staff lead worship and ensure that it is of the same high quality as other areas of the curriculum. The use of lighting, images and artefacts all help to create an atmosphere in which pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Worship is interactive and central to the school day. There is always opportunity for silent prayer and reflection for staff and pupils. Pupils explained how the themes and values discussed are often followed up in class. Common to all worship is the Biblical tradition and the inclusion of hymns, prayers and reflection. The prayers are often written and read by the pupils and they have also written a school prayer which they are able to recite alongside more traditional prayers. Pupils say how much they enjoy worship. They all have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Christian liturgical tradition, the church year, the importance of prayer and key Christian concepts such as the Trinity. Worship is an integral part of the life of the school. The year R children were eager to share the symbolism of the Christingle and explain how they carried them to church for worship. The year two pupils knew about the season of Advent and how 'we will light the middle candle of the Advent wreath for Christmas'. Pupils appreciate the spiritual spaces in the classrooms and outside which are regularly used for prayer and reflection. The Remembrance Day celebrations and poppies reflect the outstanding creativity and nature of this school. Each child was able to plant a poppy as a mark of respect. The hymn and carol singing is outstanding. From the school choir of over 100 pupils, groups regularly take part in community and church events. Pupils were thrilled to explain how they had been singing carols in Poynder's Meadow and were preparing to sing carols in the local hospital children's ward, the Christmas Tree Festival at Holy Saviour Church, Tesco and at St Giles Church. A year one pupil said 'I like choir and all of the school groups. You can come too!' Parents and grandparents regularly attend worship in school but lack of space in the parish church prevents all classes and parents attending at the same time. Parents speak highly of these events; 'A final prayer, sung as a round, creates a real moment of spiritual reflection and stillness. These assemblies are always very well attended by parents, who are thanked for coming by the headteacher. Parents and staff are encouraged to stay afterwards for a short time to chat with the children and take a closer look at their work. It is lovely to see that no child is left out as other parents and staff will deliberately engage with any child whose parent could not attend'. The lay reader has become a regular visitor to the school to lead worship. Pupils know her and enjoy her acts of worship. Her hard work and support in providing regular visits to St Giles Church has enabled the school and the pupils to retain a close link between church and school. For example, the pupils explained how they had been given luggage labels in assembly, like Paddington Bear, to write their prayers on and take them when they 'journey' to the church for the Christmas services.

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

The high aspirations, the Christian vision and drive of the headteacher and the governing body have led the school to be an example of outstanding practice. This is a school that is constantly moving forward for the benefit of its pupils. The dedication, hard work and high expectations of the headteacher and staff make this school a fun, inclusive learning environment matched by rigorous self-evaluation, monitoring and challenge. This leads directly to effective strategies for improvement and high standards of achievement set within the context of a strong and distinctive Christian character. All the issues from the last inspection have been addressed in full. RE and collective worship have a high profile in the school and meet statutory requirements. The school's aims and values are based on secure Christian foundation and are fully articulated and communicated by all members of the community. The school's motto 'Everyone will know success' is lived out in practice. Pupils of all ages and abilities make rapid gains in their learning and enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities and fun events which motivate and enhance learning. In 2013 Ofsted

judged the majority of teaching to be 'outstanding and never less than good'. Pupils know that the teachers care for them and listen to their needs. 'I like having teachers that listen to you all the time'. 'Every one of the staff cares for every child'. Subject leadership is strong and all staff attend regular professional development to further enhance the school's distinctive Christian character. The RE subject leader is a lay reader and leads training for all staff to prepare future leaders and keep the requirements of the SIAMS framework in focus; for example, the whole staff training on pupils' spiritual development planned for January. Governors know the school well and are regular visitors. One governor commented, 'We are all committed and strive to take our part in creating a caring school environment, based on Christian values, that helps us achieve our vision 'Everyone will know Success'. Parents feel well informed and comment on how much they enjoy reading the regular detailed information on the school's website. They are full of praise for the school and the dedication of the staff but have concerns over retaining the school's distinctive Christian ethos with the proposed development of 173 houses for Codicote. 'Codicote school is a happy, caring place where everyone is valued. Pupils and staff promote Christian beliefs in their daily interactions'; 'It is a very happy, caring and supportive school that holds strong Christian values at its core'. There are excellent links with the parish church and the foundation governors play a key role on the governing body. The headteacher writes a regular article for the parish magazine and pupils visit the church for RE and worship. Plans are also in place to raise parishioners' awareness of the quality of their church school by displaying pupils work in the church during Easter. At the time of this inspection the parish is in an interregnum, awaiting a new parish priest. Although the lay reader is working hard to ensure there is a seamless transition, the lack of an incumbent has left the school community unable to experience Eucharistic worship. Links with the Diocese of St Albans are strong. Staff regularly attend diocesan training and the school benefits from the headteacher being a member of the Diocesan Board of Education and implementing diocesan policy and practice.

SIAMS report December 2014 Codicote Church of England Primary School, Codicote SG4 8YL