



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Edward Peake Church of England VC Middle School  
Potton Road  
Biggleswade  
SG18 0EG



Diocese of St Albans

LA: Central Bedfordshire  
SIAS Inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2009  
Previous S23 Inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007  
URN: 109694  
Headteacher: Mandy Reddick  
SIAS Inspector Name: Lyn Field  
SIAS Inspector No: NS 151

### School Context

The school is smaller than average when compared to secondary schools nationally and serves families in Biggleswade and nearby villages. Most pupils are of White British heritage but come from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion with special educational needs and disabilities is slightly above average. The headteacher has been in post for just over a term.

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

The school has developed a clear Christian identity since the last inspection. Christian values are embraced in the daily life of the school and pupils take faith seriously. The headteacher has brought a new impetus to this development, strengthening the work of staff, governors and local churches.

### Established strengths

- The partnership with local Christian churches
- The contribution of the Christian ethos working party to school improvement
- The inclusive nature of worship in year groups
- The impact of worship and cross curricular links on spiritual development

### Focus for development

- To make use of shared observations and feedback from all groups in the school community in order to give a sharper focus to strategic planning as a church school
- To involve adults and pupils in developing a creative approach to worship and spiritual reflection in form groups

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

Christian values are being made increasingly explicit in curriculum planning and this is beginning to enrich pupils' learning and personal development. The school is working hard to implement a programme for the social and emotional aspects of pupils' learning (SEAL). This term the weekly theme is supported by specific reference to Christian teaching. This is displayed in every area of the school and the staff are working hard to make this a focus of daily life. Although the discussion of the Christian dimension is not consistent across the school, it is clearly making an impact on behaviour and personal development. The vast majority of pupils feel that it is holding them to account, especially where form tutors expect them to evaluate their own conduct at the end of each week. In addition, pupils who have a personal faith feel affirmed and encouraged in using their beliefs as the basis of their attitudes to moral and ethical issues. Where Christian values are clearly articulated they challenge pupils to reflect on questions at a deeper level. The headteacher has introduced areas for spiritual reflection into each classroom. This work is at an early stage because staff and pupils have yet to explore how these areas can be used to maximum effect. However, initial responses are positive and are beginning to reveal the quality of spiritual development that is already built into some lessons but which is not given enough prominence for all pupils to benefit. For example, in some science lessons pupils use their own creative skills in poetry and 3D art to express a sense of wonder in the subject. Pupils and adults work well together and demonstrate a good level of trust in relationships. In a Y7 music lesson there was genuine respect and appreciation for the achievements and difficulties faced by others. This extends beyond lessons to the school's charity work and the value pupils place on religious education in helping them understand diverse cultures in society.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.**

The quality of worship that pupils generally experience has a very positive impact on their spiritual development. However, this is not always the case in form group worship where the pattern of worship is not as well developed. The size of the hall restricts the possibilities for worship as a whole school but pupils enjoy meeting in year groups and respect the reverence of the occasion. Leaders take the time to plan and deliver good and sometimes excellent acts of worship that keep pupils engaged because the material is relevant to their interests and level of maturity. Links to Christianity accurately reflect Biblical teaching and faith is taken seriously. Pupils with no faith background as well as those with their own personal beliefs, feel the benefit of worship and are equally comfortable to take part. Some, for example, volunteer to offer spontaneous prayers. The staff contribute to the positive atmosphere and it is clear that worship now has an established place in the life of the school. The new headteacher has added elements that enable pupils to participate more fully and reflect on issues for themselves. However, the school recognises that the role of pupils in leading worship, especially in form time, has yet to be developed. A harvest service was held for the first time this year and there are further plans to mark important occasions and festivals in acts of worship as a way of developing the school's Anglican tradition.

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

The school has moved forward from a low point at the time of the last inspection. Recent changes made by the new headteacher with the support of the staff, have accelerated the pace of change and the school now has good capacity to improve further. A committed group of staff and governors form the Christian Ethos working party. This meets regularly and has established its role in the governance of the school. It has taken action to raise the profile of the school's Christian character and this is now clearly understood by parents and pupils. The working party reviews the progress made and this feeds some ideas into the school's development planning. However, this is currently based on informal feedback and there are no systems in place to gather views from the breadth of the school community in order to monitor the impact of changes on pupils. The areas identified for development, therefore, although relevant, have not been sharply focused enough to give a clear steer to strategic planning. The partnership with St Andrew's church and the ministry teams of other Christian churches locally is central to the school's development as a church school. This group of church leaders maintain an active and visible presence in the school through leading worship and RockSolid, a Christian group for pupils. The school has yet to make full use of their skills in resourcing spiritual development across the curriculum.