



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Little Munden Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Church Lane
Dane End
Ware
Hertfordshire
SG12 0NR

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority: Hertfordshire

Dates of inspection: 20 January 2016

Date of last inspection: 20 January 2011

School's unique reference number: 117402

Headteacher: Marina Breeze

Inspector's name and number: Chris Westgarth 44

School context

Little Munden primary school serves Dane End and the surrounding villages. It is a smaller than average primary school, with 75 on roll. Almost all the pupils are from a White British heritage. There have been several staff and leadership changes over the last couple of years. The incumbent has been in place since September 2014, the headteacher since January 2015, two new teachers were appointed in September 2015 and a new chair of Governors.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Munden as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The dedication, drive, determination and vision of the headteacher, staff and governors ensures the distinctive Christian character is sustained and the impact on behaviour, pupils' love of school and their attitudes to learning is very strong.
- The Christian belief shared throughout the school creates an atmosphere in which all pupils are nurtured and able to flourish as unique and valued individuals.
- Prayer and Bible teaching is a strong feature of the school's worship. As a result this nurtures pupils spiritual development.
- Pupils know and understand the significance of the school's Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Enhance the outdoor reflective garden and provide opportunities for informal reflection and whole school worship outside to strengthen spiritual development.
- Extend the invitation to participate in school based worship to parents and all staff on a regular basis to deepen their understanding of meaningful collective worship.

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

The Christian belief that everyone is unique and valued by God underpins everything the school does. That belief is reinforced in the school mission statement '*Knowing each child, caring for each child, developing each child*'. As a result Little Munden provides a rich curriculum, a strong Christian ethos and excellent links between religious education (RE) and collective worship. This enables outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. As one pupil summed up the comments of his friends, '*Mrs Breeze and (Rev) Alan, really all the teachers, help us to understand and 'live' the Christian and British values, so we can follow God through our life and become better people*'. This Christian ethos enables the school to provide excellent pastoral support for all. School attendance is outstanding (currently 97%) because pupils want to come to school and are ready to participate and enjoy learning. As a result pupils are happy, feel valued, safe and enjoy learning. This is having significant impact on achievement, which is mostly above national expectations. The high profile given to collective worship and RE has a substantial impact on the school's strong commitment to inclusion and pupils' SMSC development. RE contributes very effectively to pupils' growing and deepening understanding of the Christian faith along with that of Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. As a result their knowledge of these faiths is robust. Highly effective teaching of RE motivates pupils who appreciate the relevance of the subject to their lives. Consequently pupils are enthusiastic about learning and there are no withdrawals from RE. Meaningful discussion times, through 'Philosophy 4 Children', about world affairs help pupils to understand the challenges in the world today and the place of Christianity as a world faith. An excellent example of these discussion times is the linking the journey Mary, Joseph and Jesus took to Egypt with the plight of refugees. Bright, prominent displays together with quiet, reflective areas in classrooms greatly enhance pupils' spiritual development, as do the school grounds, which include a special garden. Understanding and living out respect for all is well developed and charitable giving is strong with pupils keen to help those in need. This is as a result of what they have learnt in RE and collective worship. Children readily engage and enjoy all aspects of learning. Pupils are well motivated, have positive attitudes, and speak with pride and enthusiasm about their school, their teachers and their learning. Friendships are strong and behaviour exemplary. This is reinforced by such strategies as 'helping hands, stars of the week and the buddy scheme'. Links with the parish church are strong, with the vicar, lay minister and members being actively involved in the day-to-day life of the school. There is a wide range of lunchtime and after school clubs and '*Messy sports and craft*' sessions at the church further enhances the link between school and church. In April 2015 the school for the first time held a RE week, the focus was prayer. This was extremely beneficial and the impact is on going with pupils still talking about all they did and learnt. As a result prayer throughout the school has been strengthened.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is central to the life of the school. It is well planned, monitored and evaluated by pupils, staff and governors. The worship coordinator and incumbent work well to ensure that high quality collective worship is delivered and has an impact on the life of the school. Lent book with puzzles, pictures, texts and reflections are used during Lent.

Through collective worship there is a growing understanding of key Christian doctrines, including the character of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, not all pupils are confident about talking about the Trinity but the school is working hard to address this. Pupils have a good robust knowledge of Bible stories and key Christian festivals. They also appreciate their church and Anglican practice as a consequence of the services held in the church. Children, staff, parents and governors value such worship. However parents and governors would like to be more involved in school based worship. The school has rightly identified the next steps for worship as involving and encouraging more adults to participate and be engaged in meaningful worship. Prayer is strong throughout the school and the inclusion of reflective areas in classrooms has helped reinforce this. Pupils would like '*more prayer*' in the school. Pupils have a

'grounded in life' approach to prayer, for example the year 6 pupil who was nervous about the key stage 2 assessments, prayed and was calmer. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in worship and they enjoy writing their own prayers, singing and performing drama activities. There is good involvement from outside groups, including Assembly Angels, governors, staff and church members. Pupils know and understand the importance of the Lord's Prayer, readily talking about forgiveness and knowing right from wrong. The attitude of pupils to collective worship is good because the quality of worship offered to them is making a real difference in their lives, contributing greatly to their spiritual development. Pupils readily talk about worship and God, they are deep thinkers and this is often reflected in their questioning and responses during worship. As a result prayerful and meaningful worship takes place, with a focus on Christian values and Jesus' teaching in the Bible. As one pupil commented, '*Worship is good because you get to learn about Jesus and have a time to be quiet but also to sing*'.

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

The headteacher and leadership team consistently promote a clear, exemplary vision for the school. This vision is rooted in a Christian understanding of the value of each person, which is lived out through a number of clear values understood by the whole school community. The areas of development from the last inspection have not only been addressed but are well embedded in the life of the school. Parents have a strong relationship with the school. They recognise the Christian character of the school and comment that it reinforces Christian values at home. Governors know their school well; they visit and monitor regularly. The distinctive Christian character and the development of the school as a church school are a standing item at leadership and governor meetings. This has resulted in staff and governors being able to articulate how it has benefited the school and pupils. As a result the school is a happy place and all feel valued, safe and enjoy learning. This has a significant impact on achievement, which is mostly above national expectations. Involvement in leadership by pupils is strong with groups including the worship team and school council. The school is a '*reaching out*' school and along with the church is at the heart of the community. It is held in high esteem by the whole community and is very actively involved with the church and the village. Pupils comment '*The church is our church...it's so close to the school...we just walk along 'church corridor*'. As a result there are solid partnerships between the school, parents, church, and the community it serves. Links with the diocese are strong and training opportunities are having a positive influence. Through continued training, senior leaders and governors are developing robust systems for effective succession planning.

The school regularly seeks the views and opinions of parents, pupils and staff. This ensures that self-evaluation is robust and accurate. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are well met as a result of strong support for these areas by senior leaders. This is demonstrated by the fact that RE, worship and the distinctive Christian character of the school are included in the school improvement plan and regularly discussed at senior leadership and governor meetings. Leaders value the contribution pupils make to the evaluation of the impact of worship. Consequently the high profile given to collective worship and RE has a substantial impact on the school's strong commitment to the effectiveness and distinctiveness of Little Munden as church school.

SIAMS report January 2016 Little Munden, Dane End, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 0NR