



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Graveley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ashwell Common  
Graveley  
SG4 7LJ

#### Diocese: St Albans

Local authority: Hertfordshire  
Date of inspection: 8 November 2013  
Date of last inspection: 1 December 2008  
School's unique reference number: 117395  
Headteacher: Mrs Lisa Massey  
Inspector's name and number: Miss Chris Westgarth 44

#### School context

Graveley is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The parish church is a short walk from the school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is below average. The number of pupils with a special educational need or disability is below the national average. The headteacher has been in post since 2008. Since the last inspection, the school buildings have been extended and the grounds enhanced.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Graveley Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

This is because of:

- The explicit role played by Christian values in promoting high expectations and standards.
- The excellent links between the church and the school.
- High quality collective worship, which impacts positively on the lives of all at the school.
- Outstanding relationships at all levels, which create an inclusive family atmosphere.

#### Areas to improve

- Firmly establish the role of the *Collectives* and pupils in leading, monitoring and evaluating collective worship.
- Maintain the process of evaluating the church school distinctiveness in order to continually improve progress and learning.

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

Christian values are at the heart of this school. There are excellent relationships and everyone is valued as an individual. This means that this is a happy and secure place to learn or work. There is a strong team spirit and a commitment to continuous improvement, resulting in children who are aspirational and hardworking. Explicit Christian values are woven through the whole school curriculum and therefore a positive learning environment is created. Children are nurtured towards a growth mind-set rather than a fixed one. Pupils say, 'We often try new challenges and know we can ask for help with our learning.'

This is having a definite influence on the learning and achievement of pupils with standards rising each year, with pupils making good to outstanding progress. Displays are bright and prominent and each class has a quiet reflective prayer space. These displays enhance pupils' spiritual development. The grounds are constantly evolving with new areas and ideas. The outdoor learning area and eco garden have areas for reflection and pupils say, 'it is good to be able to sit and think'. Pupils delight to explain how each area was created and is now cared for. The school has core values of *Fellowship, Creativity and Harmony* and each term these values are expanded. Pupils are able to articulate well what they have learnt about each value and how they build on that. There are termly celebrations of the values and these are extended to the local community. The small values trees, on which the values leaves are hung, and the embroidered cloths have a positive effect of creating focus during the worship times. Opportunities for the pupil voice to be heard are strong with numerous groups such as eco warriors, pupil parliament and the collectives group. 'Young leaders' are involved in organising games in the playground for younger pupils and this enhances the family, inclusive nature of the school. As a result spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and well promoted. Religious education (RE) contributes very effectively to pupils' growing and deepening understanding of the Christian faith along with Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective teaching motivates pupils who appreciate the relevance of the subject to their lives. Community cohesion is very strong, locally, through regular outreach work and internationally with each year group sponsoring a child's education. The school raised sponsorship money via the successful fun run, which the pupils speak enthusiastically about. The school through its excellent outreach programme gave Harvest flowers to the villagers. This coincided with a visit from the Bishop of Hertford. Therefore the school is firmly at the heart of the community. Church and school links are strengthened through the Christmas journey for Year 2 and the Easter journey for Year 6. These interactive sessions are held at St Nicholas' Church and pupils are able to recount the stories with great passion and excitement. The Christian Charity *Bridge Builders* is actively involved in the life of the school and the impact of the *Whale Tales* and counselling sessions, they provide is evidenced by the outstanding relationships and behaviour across the school community. As a result attendance is high, friendships are strong, incidents of bullying very low and there have been no exclusions in the past three years. As a pupil commented in the playground 'we have a buddy bench but we don't use it as we are all friends'.

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

High quality worship is well planned, promoting and deepening pupils' understanding of Christian values. As a result, pupils are able to relate these key values to Christian teaching and Bible stories. A Year 5 pupil commented 'Stories and songs in worship help us learn about Jesus'. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in worship and they enjoy writing their own prayers, as one pupil said 'I like to give God my best'. Worship is high quality because a wide variety of styles, music, drama and pupil participation is incorporated. All staff lead worship, along with some governors and Christian festivals are celebrated in school and in church. The pupil collective worship group (the Collectives) is having a positive influence in additional evaluation and monitoring and leading of collective worship. However, this group was only formed in May 2013 so their contribution is yet to be fully realised. Pupils know and understand the importance of The Lord's Prayer, readily talking about forgiveness and knowing right from wrong. Each class says Grace before lunch and there is a time for reflection at the end of each day. There are reflection areas in each class, monitored closely by the headteacher. These are becoming an established part of each classroom and children readily talk about them and the importance of prayer. They comment that they 'like having prayer time' and 'It is good to give our worries or thanks to God'. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the worship theme and record their thoughts on the values/reflection tree in the entrance hall. Through collective worship there is a growing understanding of key Christian doctrines, including the character of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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

The school leadership consistently promotes a clear, exemplary vision for the school, which is rooted in distinctively Christian values. The school has worked hard to make sure all areas of development from the last inspection have not only been met but are truly embedded in the life of the school. Leaders, including governors, are committed to the development of the school's distinctive Christian character and recognise the real contribution this makes to the promotion of continuing high standards and progress for all pupils. As a result Graveley is an inclusive community. The head and assistant head have

played key roles in ensuring that the school's Christian values and vision lie at the heart of school life. The evidence portfolios clearly document the Christian character improvements the school has made. There are high expectations and a strong sense of Christian purpose for all at Graveley. The RE leader has a clear understanding of the subject and how it links to the school ethos and filters into daily life, helping pupils with their relationships, their goals and their spirituality. The monitoring and evaluation by governors is robust, continually improving and addressing pupil achievement. Foundation governors help to maintain good church, school and diocesan links. Annual parent questionnaires and ParentView support the view that they are very happy with the ethos of the school and 87% strongly agree or agree that their child enjoys collective worship. Pupils, parents, staff and governors speak with pride about their school. Governors and staff alike value the support of the diocese, in providing training workshops. The vicar is involved in leading collective worship and football training; enhancing Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) values across the curriculum. Reflection and self-evaluation are integral to everything that the school does and result in a relentless drive to improve outcomes for pupils. There have been several changes on the governing body and new governors are taking more of a strategic role. The school demonstrates commitment to building for the future by providing effective staff development. The distinctive Christian character of the school is always included in the school development plan. Therefore, training and budgeting for resources are reviewed annually to ensure that the needs of the school as a Church of England school are well met.

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