



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **Alburgh with Denton VC Church of England Primary School**

School Road  
Alburgh  
Harleston  
IP20 0BW

#### **Diocese: Norwich**

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016

Date of last inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011

School's unique reference number: 1214025

Headteacher: Mr Joel Crawley

Inspector's name and number: Anna Reeder 659

#### **School context**

The small rural school has just under 100 pupils with almost half coming from out of catchment. The school formed a collaborative trust in January 2016 with its high school and three other primary church schools. A new incumbent has been in post for two years and a benefice school worker was appointed in September 2016. The current headteacher is leaving the school at the end of the summer and the senior teacher will be acting headteacher in September. One of the parish churches is within easy walking distance, but both churches are visited within the school year.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Alburgh with Denton as a Church of England school are good**

- Relationships throughout the school are excellent and rooted in the core values of Christian love and care. The pupils have exemplary behaviour.
- The school provides an exciting and interesting curriculum which has a strong focus on the development of the whole child, both intellectually and spiritually.
- The school's community work well together to develop and sustain high standards. Their focus is to develop every child as an individual.

#### **Areas to improve**

- **Develop opportunities for pupils to plan and lead acts of worship over the school year**
- **Develop and embed class-based reflective worship and monitor the impact of this.**

- **Develop and embed the monitoring and evaluation work of the ethos committee with a focus on the development of church school distinctiveness.**

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

Achievement and progress are excellent at the school, and this applies to all groups of children, including those who are disadvantaged. The behaviour and manners of the pupils at the school are exemplary and it is a natural way of being for the children. They look after one another, respect each other, and talk clearly about how the core value of Christian care guides their actions. The Christian character of the school has enabled this quality of relationships by putting Jesus' message to love one another at the core of everything they do. The whole staff team model the behaviour consistently. Christian love guides the school each and every day. A Year 6 pupil who transferred from a non-church school articulated this. "You can be a nice person, but it's more than that. It's based on Christian values. It's much deeper. This school is different." The school has provided its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum which is outward-looking and enables the children to develop an understanding and respect for the multicultural world beyond its rural setting. The school has links with other schools in Malawi and also Luton and Haringey where the children write to each other and exchange news and photographs to find out about each other's lives. The children go on many trips to broaden their horizons and to develop their aspirations such as a trip to London to see all the major sights and museums, and a career fair organised by the school's trust held at the cathedral. These activities are planned carefully to give the children a wider view of the world beyond their own local area. Following Diocesan training the school has implemented an enquiry-based approach for religious education and as a result the children are interested in asking and answering big questions about faith. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education opportunities are built in across the whole curriculum. A display in the main hall shows how this impacts on all areas of school life from appreciation of others' lifestyles in different schools to the role of prayer in the school day. The school works in partnership with its families to provide individualised care for the children which enables them to make outstanding progress; the exemplification of Christian love.

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

Collective worship follows Values for Life themes and regularly includes Biblical materials and Christian teaching. The children talked animatedly about the recent worship theme of wisdom and about some of the linked stories they had listened to in worship such as King Solomon, and the parable of the two builders. They were able to explain what wisdom meant to them and how they were trying to incorporate this value in to their own lives. "It is all about learning from your mistakes and developing your understanding." In worship, three Year 6 children were faced with a friendship dilemma devised by the headteacher and used what they had learned about wisdom from worship sessions to solve the problem, with input from their peers. Worship themes have an influence on the behaviour and relationships in school; they impact on pupils' choices and decisions. There are a range of worship leaders in school, and the school is now very well supported by the local church with an Open the Book team from the church community, and members of the clergy team who come to lead worship in school on a weekly basis alongside the school staff. The proactive incumbent has implemented this change which has been welcomed by the school, and the church now plays a key role in worship in the school. The benefice worker contributes to writing acts of collective worship, sits on the school's ethos committee and attends special services in school such as the Ash Wednesday service. She has also introduced Messy Church activities in school, and has developed a supportive partnership with the families involved in this. The school attends services in the parish churches over the year and participates in key Christian festivals. The children are able to talk about the key Christian festivals but have a limited understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The pupils enjoy participating in worship and would

welcome further opportunities to plan and lead worship. The school has begun an end of the week reflective time in class groups where pupils can discuss the week's worship messages. It is too early to see the impact of this personal reflection time, but pupils value opportunities for reflection in a more intimate setting. Children like the opportunities for prayer throughout the day and the governors are planning to establish a quiet reflective area in school with the refurbishment of the library to build on this further.

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

The school is a high achieving school. The headteacher and his team have created a strong and vibrant community rooted in the core value of Christian love. The school completed a key piece of work last year when it revisited its core values and vision with its community. These values, clearly displayed at the entrance to the school, drive the school and underpin the excellent quality of education and relationships that clearly exist. Pupils all talk clearly about the importance of the core value of care and how they try to live out this value in their life at school, and many understand that this grows from Jesus' guidance of loving one another as we would wish to be loved. The school team articulate this in wanting all their pupils to grow to be the best they can be. Governance is strong and the group know the school well and have high expectations for it. An ethos group has been established recently and now has a clear focus on monitoring and evaluating the school's distinctive character as a church school. This group consists of a broad cross section of the school and church community, including foundation governors. The group's self-evaluation and monitoring is developing and the group are attending training to support their vital work. The action plan for the year ahead has set out a clear path for future developments. The foci for development from the last inspection have not been fully met, although actions have been taken to move the school on in relation to worship and monitoring, but there is still scope for further improvements in these areas. Religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements. There were elements of collective worship that did not meet the statutory requirements but the school has put in the necessary adjustments to ensure that this is now the case. Singing practice now has a worship and reflective element incorporated and class based worship has been introduced as well as the celebration assembly for the last day of the week. The school acts in partnership with the local church and has welcomed their reinvigorated presence in the school, and is now in the position to develop ways to strengthen the school's presence in church in collaboration with the incumbent. The school has a successful plan for succession planning and the senior teacher has completed National Professional Qualifications for Headship and sits on the ethos committee, which will stand her in good stead to take up the leadership of the school next year.

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