



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

High Beech Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mott Street, Loughton
IG10 4AP

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex

Dates of inspection: 15 October 2015

Date of last inspection: October 2010

School's unique reference number: 115096

Headteacher: Sally Elliott

Inspector's name and number: Gillian Holmes 849

School context

High Beech school is a smaller than average primary school with four classes. The school is set in a rural location, on the edge of Epping Forest. The school is being led by an interim headteacher. The previous headteacher moved to another school at the summer term 2015 and a new headteacher is due to take up her appointment in January 2016. The school has a large catchment area, catering for a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school has close links with the parish church where a third of the pupils attend regularly with their families.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of High Beech Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- It is the outworking of the Christian values by the pupils and staff that makes the school distinctively Christian
- The school as a Christian community develops positive attitudes amongst the pupils allowing them to become confident, independent learners
- The exceptional links between the church and the school contributes effectively to school life and work

Areas to improve

- Embed systems for monitoring and evaluating worship and the development of the school's Christian distinctiveness involving pupils, parents, governors and staff
- Ensure pupils take a fuller role in planning and leading worship

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

High Beech has a rich, exciting learning environment. The school is committed to providing high quality Christian education for all pupils. The Christian ethos is underpinned by the gospel

values of compassion, friendship, forgiveness, hope and enthusiasm which are worked out through the school's 'terrific' expectations. These are trust, enthusiasm, respect, responsibility, independence, fairness, inclusivity and caring. Behaviour is excellent and pupils and staff attribute this to the importance of the gospel values. Pupils enjoy coming to school and so attendance is excellent and there have been no exclusions. The school is recognised by pupils, parents and governors as a 'Christian family' with close links to the village church. Joint activities between the school and the church help pupils to learn about their place in community. Fund raising activities frequently involve the village community and the school's support for the Bishop's African appeal has enhanced pupils' global awareness. The school's response to the recent death of one of its staff highlighted the importance of the church in school life. Pupils and staff came together in the church to pray and receive comfort and support from the incumbent. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and so make good progress. There is a focus on challenging pupils to ask questions, make decisions and become independent learners. The values underpin the curriculum and an application of the gospel values is incorporated into all aspects of learning. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about other faiths by visiting different places of worship and welcoming visitors from other faiths into the school. This supports pupils understanding of diversity in religious belief and practice. Pupils of all abilities receive individual support to allow them to flourish. Able pupils have enhancement opportunities and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are supported and fully included in all school activity. Parents praise the Christian ethos which they believe helps their children to develop caring inclusive attitudes to every member of the school. 'Children accept each other for who they are'. Parents gave examples of how their children talk about the school's gospel values at home and how it influences their out of school behaviour.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils have a positive attitude to worship which plays an important role in school life. This is confirmed and supported by parents and governors. Prayerful and meaningful worship takes place with a focus on gospel values and biblical teaching. This contributes significantly to the life of the school, to pupils' very good spiritual and moral development and to enhancing the school's Christian distinctiveness. Worship is effectively planned by the interim headteacher and the worship leader. At present pupils do not have opportunities to share in the planning or to help lead worship. Pupils do however play a role in worship by helping to act out stories, by reading Bible passages and leading prayers. All pupils are encouraged to participate as worship including through questioning and the use of talk partners. Pupils are encouraged to decide themselves how the stories they hear illustrate the gospel values. The local church is used for festival services and for the end of term service, when parents are encouraged to join with the school. The incumbent leads worship in school once a week and she has ensured that pupils are aware of Anglican practices and the seasons of the church's year. Three candles are lit each day for worship to focus pupils on the three parts of the Trinity; God the Father, Jesus his Son and the Holy Spirit. Pupils can explain the Trinity and recall many Bible stories. Pupils understand the importance of prayer and describe prayer as 'messages to God'. Each class has its own prayer book of prayers written by class members. Pupils help to lead prayers in worship and grace is said at lunchtime. Pupils talk enthusiastically about Friday's worship which celebrates pupils' achievements. Staff and pupils nominate children for awards if they have displayed one of the values through their attitude and behaviour. The systems in place for gathering feedback on worship have been set up this term by the interim headteacher. Consequently, it is too early to judge their effectiveness. The school has rightly identified the need to set up a forum of parents and pupils to assess the impact of the school values on its ethos and on daily worship. Plans are in place to do this.

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

school is outstanding

The previous headteacher involved all stakeholders in revisiting and embedding the vision and values that make High Beech distinctively Christian. Opportunities have been taken to maximise the wealth of opportunities in the school grounds for pupils to reflect and experience awe and wonder. This has included the implementation of Forest Schools. The incumbent has worked tirelessly with everyone involved in the school to deepen the relationship between church and school. All pupils and staff receive good pastoral care and sound Anglican Christian teaching. Many school families have recently joined the church. Arrangements for RE and worship meet statutory requirements. The RE subject leader who also leads on coordinating worship is new to the school but has enthusiastically taken up the role. Working well with the interim headteacher, they have ensured that RE and worship has a high profile. Parents are supportive of the school and describe the care of the children by the headteacher and staff as 'exceptional'. They are kept well informed of their child's progress and feel included in the life of the school by being able to attend Friday's worship. The weekly parent newsletter keeps them up to date with events in school and church. It also informs them of the gospel value that is the focus that week. Governors are strongly committed to the school and the school development plan. Church school distinctiveness has its own section in the plan and is a standing item on the governing body agenda. During the recent recruitment for a headteacher the governors ensured that applicants recognised the Christian distinctiveness of the school and were willing to work with all stakeholders to continue its development. The interim headteacher, ably supported by the governors and staff, has continued to implement the action plans agreed with the previous head. This means that pupils are continuing to receive the best possible educational experience and that links with the church remain strong.

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