



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

### **Elworth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

School Lane  
Elworth  
Cheshire  
CW11 3HU

#### **Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Cheshire East  
Dates of inspection: 28/06/13  
Date of last inspection: 16/09/09  
School's unique reference number: 111256  
Headteacher: Mrs Karen Samples  
Inspector's name and number: Christine J Buckley 525

#### **School context**

Elworth Church of England Primary School is a larger than average primary school and the majority of children are white British and come from families of above average social and economic advantage. The proportion of children who are eligible for free school meals is very low and also the number of children with learning needs is below average though this number is on the increase.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Elworth as a Church of England school are good**

Elworth Church of England is a good school founded upon clear Christian values and teaching. The children are happy and secure and develop well spiritually and academically reaching high levels of attainment. Christian values contribute significantly to the moral and social development of the children and the outworking of this is seen in their efforts to help others both at a local and global level. Children also benefit from strong supportive church and parental links.

#### **Established strengths**

- A Christian ethos that is recognised by all members of the school community.
- The significant contribution of Religious Education to the Christian character of the school.
- Strong and supportive relationships in the school that are based upon clear Christian values.

#### **Focus for development**

- The establishment of structures to regularly evaluate the Christian character of the school by all stakeholders.

- To prepare detailed planning and support for collective worship, especially class worship, and evaluate regularly.
- To provide more opportunities for children to plan and deliver collective worship.

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

The children recognise their school as a Christian school with Christian values. These values influence their thinking and daily actions. They talk about knowing what is right and wrong and how, when they pray, God guides and helps them to choose to do the right thing. Others talked about how God helps them when work or activities are challenging. The school has worked hard to enable all children to achieve well. Finance and staff support is in place so that vulnerable children can reach their potential. At the same time the school provides pastoral support for children and their families. This provision is borne out of Christian values and treating every person as special and created by God. Achievement and attainment is high and above the national average for all schools. Attendance in school has increased over time and is higher than national averages. Children's behaviour is exemplary and the school has not excluded any child during the past three years. Children enjoy religious education (RE) and it makes a positive contribution to their personal development. Children across the school have a good knowledge and understanding of Jesus and Biblical stories. Outstanding teaching of RE was observed where children were encouraged to think about their response to the teaching of Jesus. Older children express themselves clearly and confidently about their opinions and are able to articulate their faith or no faith. The teachers observed were well planned and appropriate material to support learning was produced so that high quality learning took place. In the key stage two lesson multi-cultural Christian faith communities were used as examples of worship providing a breadth of experience for the children. Children and staff are very happy in school and relationships show mutual respect and understanding. Listening to one another and forgiving are key elements in the development of good relationships. One child talked about the example of Jesus on the cross as inspiration for forgiving others who wrong us. Children also extend respect to other cultures and faiths both within school and globally. They support a child in Bangladesh through the Christian organisation World Vision. Empathy for others was observed on the day of the inspection as the school council arranged a competition to raise money for a local children's hospice. The school environment is warm and welcoming and there are many visual reminders of the school's Christian character ranging from banners in the entrance, to a prayer tree in the hall to reflection areas in the classroom but the use of these is not consistent.

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

Collective worship is a key element in the school day and all members of the school community benefit from the acts of worship. The children are able to talk about the things they enjoy and also they have ideas about the development of collective worship. Whole school collective worship has relevant Biblical teaching that includes the nature of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The key elements of worship are always included in whole school worship with singing teaching, time for reflection, prayer and application to daily living. Children use the reflection areas in the classrooms as an opportunity to pray and prayer is said at lunchtimes and at the end of the day. This enables the children to understand and develop prayer that impacts beyond the school day. One small child told his mum, who would not call herself religious, that sometimes when he goes to bed he says a prayer. This is evidence of personal spiritual development and the impact of school worship. The headteacher, staff and clergy lead worship and model Christian behaviour for the children to emulate. The vicar is part of the school family and leads whole school and class worship. He is well liked and has a pastoral role for both the children, staff and parents, supporting personal development. Christian festivals where parents join in the celebrations are held in church during the school year. Once a month the vicar holds a prayer circle for children, staff and parents. These meetings are valued by all who attend and the meetings help them to pray effectively for the school family and at the same time support the individual prayer life of participants. The church also supports spiritual development by providing holiday clubs and a weekly youth club where fun activities are combined with Christian

teaching, praise and prayer. About half of the children involved are from Elworth school. A strength of collective worship is the recently formed 'worship council' made up of children from key stage two. The children involved are very enthusiastic and their evaluation has led to some development of collective worship and the council is now ready to include more stakeholders and to be involved in the planning. The planning of collective worship is an area for development as it currently only provides a very basic outline. It needs to have more detail and show a coherent development of Christian themes. All stakeholders should have the opportunity to contribute to this improvement.

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

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and leaders of the school clearly articulate a Christian vision for the school which they know impacts upon the children and members of the school family. It would be beneficial if this was communicated more effectively in published material. They have a good understanding of the school's performance because of rigorous self-evaluation strategies which lead to the formation of the school development priorities. Religious education and collective worship are considered by the school leaders as essential elements to school life and as such they have already appointed an experienced member of staff as the RE co-ordinator for the next academic year to replace an absent member of staff. This demonstrates their management skills in planning for continuity of provision relating to the school's Christian character. The headteacher and other staff make effective use of training offered by the diocese for professional development. Links with parents are a strength of the school and parents speak favourably of the relationships in the school and the approachability of the headteacher and staff. Strong links with the church through the vicar, foundation governors and members of the church encourage children to participate in church activities. The church and school use both buildings for activities and the church hall is used for wrap around care every day. Displays of work from the school children are on view in the church to enable members to understand and see the learning that takes place in school. Although it was a recommendation of the last inspection, the school has not yet set up systems of self-evaluation with regard to the Christian distinctiveness. This is an area that needs to be prioritised. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors are committed to do this and it is on the agenda for the next governors' meeting.

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