



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



 The **Methodist Church**

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

### **Abbots Ripton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Wennington Road,  
Abbots Ripton, Cambridgeshire  
PE28 2LT

**Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire

Dates of inspection: 10 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 29 -30 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 110850

Headteacher: Rebecca Ireland

Inspector's name and number: Judith Ruff 528

### **School context**

Abbots Ripton is a smaller than average primary school with 91 pupils, serving the village of Abbots Ripton and the surrounding area. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed. There has also been a significant turnover of staff. The recent Ofsted inspection in late June judged the school to be good. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attending the school is below average. The church of St Andrew is just a short walking distance away.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Abbots Ripton (VA) as a Church of England school are good**

- Within the school the strong family atmosphere nurtures pupils' levels of care and concern for each other and results in exemplary relationships and behaviours, built on clear and distinctive Christian values
- In RE, the enquiry based approach, including the use of challenging questions to promote discussion, enthuses pupils to analyse and interpret information so that they can more fully understand the impact of religion on believers
- The high quality leadership of RE and collective worship, which is constantly evaluating provision, encourages the growth of creativity and innovation across these areas

### **Areas to improve**

- To re-evaluate the ways in which pupils record their RE work, so that progress can be more easily understood, opportunities for extended RE writing developed and marking and feedback used to guide pupils into improving work through clear next steps
- To increase the use of visits and visitors in order to enable pupils to have a deeper understanding of the diversity of Christian denominations as well as other faiths

- To develop pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith so that they appreciate the diversity and richness that can be found within the Christian faith

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

In this school strong family values inter-mesh seamlessly with the distinctive Christian values that the school promotes. The school's mission statement 'We grow in Faith: Learn for life and Achieve our Best' is proudly displayed, both on the school's website and within the school. Parents speak very positively about the caring, compassionate behaviours of their children, which continue into secondary schooling through a sense of responsibility and duty to the younger pupils. Initiatives such as the 'buddy' system, whereby Year 6 pupils are partnered with a younger child, the 'Friendship Bench' and the 'Vine' that runs throughout the corridors emphasise the importance of valuing everyone as a unique individual. Pupil behaviour is exemplary. They have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. Rewards are highly prized, such as opportunities to take tea with the headteacher, in the shade of the willow dome during the inspection. Spiritual development is good, promoted well through a whole school curriculum audit, thus raising awareness of this aspect, and times for reflection during the school day. Relationships throughout the school are high quality, a testament to how the school leaders have managed a significant staff turnover in the past years. Pupils confidently link Christian values to Bible stories and can explain how values such as 'courage' and 'perseverance' can support them in meeting challenges. One pupil described how he was taking part in a school play and overcame his nerves by 'knowing that Jesus is by my side'. Attainment levels are rising across the school, including those of vulnerable pupils. Attendance is in line with national averages. Pupils' understanding of the diversity and difference within other Christian communities is less well developed, as is their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. RE makes a strong contribution to the school's Christian character.

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

Collective worship is well planned and delivered. The lighting of the candle and opening greeting ensures that all are ready for worship. Pupils enjoy opportunities to worship, although they would like increased opportunities to be more involved. Over recent months, pupils from Years 4 and 5 have experienced planning and delivering collective worship to their class. This has given them a greater understanding of the structure and importance of worship to Christians. Pupils sing well. Parents commented on how pleased they were with the school sharing both music and songs with the local churches, which has supported the development of the Sunday Family Services locally. Opportunities to understand the purposes of prayer are good within the school, with the 'prayer net' capturing spontaneous children's prayers and the writing of prayers for worship. The school's chosen values are embedded through collective worship. The recent re-structuring of the way in which these values are communicated over shorter periods of time, has added a new vibrancy to worship. Collective worship is monitored well by senior leaders and governors. This is a positive improvement from the previous inspection report. Recent monitoring of class based collective worship showed that pupils were not all fully aware that this was a worship time. This issue has been subsequently resolved. Follow up discussion of the impact of changes after monitoring and evaluation has taken place is less well recorded. Pupils are clear about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The use of Trinitarian prayers and Anglican liturgical phrases is less well developed. The church is used regularly for worship, with the rector supporting these services. Parents comment that their children are noticeably more confident taking part in church family services, through readings, answering questions and a relaxed sense of familiarity with the building. Reflection times are offered within worship, allowing pupils to think about how the value can impact on themselves and others. Visitors such as 'Lite 'n' Life' and GENr8 are very popular within the school. Visits by the diocesan Bishop and visits to Ely Cathedral also have extended pupils' understanding of worship. As yet, pupils' experiences of different Christian traditions in worship has been limited, although amongst the pupils there are those from evangelical and

other denominational backgrounds.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

RE is led effectively by a knowledgeable subject leader, who liaises well with local networks to keep updated of latest ideas and practice in the subject. Attainment in RE is in line with that of the core areas of mathematics and literacy. The teaching of RE is at least good, with two outstanding lessons taught during the inspection. Subject Leader monitoring and evaluation through lesson observations and book scrutinies support staff confidence and ability to teach RE well. The emphasis on an enquiry based approach to teaching RE has resulted in pupils who are confident in discussing challenging questions, whilst respecting the points of view of others. Pupil in Years 2 and 3 were listening to the song 'Make me a channel of your peace' and then discussing how this peace was different to the peace that Mrs Large wanted in the story book 'Five Minutes Peace'. Pupils used talking partners effectively as they concentrated hard on trying to explain the difference. Class 'Learning Journeys' are used well to recapture learning and discussion from units. Assessment in RE is thorough using the 'Assessment for Learning' approach of noting down pupils' responses to the work and evaluating attainment and progress at the end of each unit. Currently, pupils do not have their own RE workbook. Although they can celebrate their work within the 'Learning Journeys', they are not easily able to look through their individual RE work and gain a sense of the work covered or progress that they have made. Opportunities for extended writing opportunities in RE are too limited, although oral contributions are exceptional and very well recorded. Teachers' marking and feedback is currently not rigorous enough to support pupils with next steps in learning, thus improving the quality of their recorded work. Pupils' attitudes to RE are very positive. They are exceptionally interested in learning about other world faiths. The Years 4 and 5 were observed studying the 'Hand of Fatima' in a unit on Islam and their knowledge of this religion was very impressive. The use of visits to other faith buildings and visitors into school from other faiths is underdeveloped. Governors have a good awareness of assessment procedures and standards and progress in RE through regular monitoring visits and discussions at governor meetings.

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

Leadership of both RE and collective worship is good within the school. Leaders are not afraid to be flexible in their approaches, using outcomes from monitoring activities to introduce changes. This has resulted in a creative and innovative approach to improving practice. Both governors and school leaders have built an effective vision for the school, based on distinctive Christian values, which have permeated across the school community. Governors are effective partners in the improving performance of the school. Their levels of understanding have been significantly increased by their monitoring activities which have been conscientiously undertaken. Self- evaluation processes are accurate and feed directly into school improvement planning. Induction of new staff has been carried out well. In particular, the way in which the RE Subject Leader has worked alongside a newly appointed member of the teaching staff has resulted in significant levels of raised confidence and skills, particularly in the area of assessment. Succession planning for church school leadership is taken seriously within the school with discussions resulting in opportunities being created to lead on key aspects of church school distinctiveness, such as leading collective worship. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Those interviewed very much value the church school links and build on the Christian values in their home lives. Church links are good, with the rector involved in the leadership of collective worship and as a knowledgeable and active member of the governing body, undertaking her monitoring role diligently. Pupil leadership opportunities are good. The mature and responsible way in which these are taken up and developed across the school is impressive. For example, a pupil leader of worship explained very eloquently how much he and the rest of his peers had learned about leading worship. Partnership with the diocese is very strong, with high quality support being given to both the headteacher and the rest of the school. Training opportunities are taken up and lead to positive improvements, such as the enquiry based approach in RE.

SIAMS report June2015 Abbots Ripton C of E Primary School, Wennington Road, PE28 2LT