



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Pointon St Gilbert of Sempringham Church of England Primary School

West Road  
Pointon  
Sleaford  
NG34 0NA

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Lincoln**

Local authority: Lincolnshire

Dates of inspection: 26 November 2015

Date of last inspection: January 2011

School's unique reference number: 120606

Headteacher: Emma Hunt

Inspector's name and number: Yvonne Shaw 245

#### School context

St Gilbert of Sempringham Primary School serves the village of Pointon and the surrounding rural area. It is smaller than average with 70 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium funding is allocated is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much smaller than average and no pupils currently speak English as an acquired language. The proportion of pupils with additional needs is broadly average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Gilbert of Sempringham as a Church of England school are good

- Guided by the headteacher's vision, resilience and dedication, leaders ensure the inclusion of all within a strong and vibrant Christian ethos.
- Deeply held Christian values and the pastoral care given to pupils and their families fosters strong relationships within the school and the community.
- The shared Christian vision is ensuring that pupils love learning, have positive attitudes, achieve well and demonstrate exemplary behaviour.
- Rich and profoundly spiritually uplifting experiences are provided through acts of worship, some of which are held in the outdoor auditorium.

#### Areas to improve

- Embed the church schools distinctiveness action plan ensuring regular monitoring, evaluation and subsequent actions for each priority.
- Strengthen teachers' skills in the assessment of religious education (RE) to ensure that knowledge gained impacts on planning for next steps in learning.
- Build on actions taken since the previous inspection to include pupils more fully in the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship.

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

Set within the overarching Christian value of fellowship, the school's ethos is known as 'St Gilbert's Fellowship'. The Fellowship is based firmly in the context of deeply embedded Christian values of forgiveness, wisdom, honesty, caring and perseverance. The school community shares the mission statement embodied in the symbolism of the St Gilbert's tree. The tree is prominently displayed in and around school, creating an effective reminder of the school's core purpose. By ensuring the school's Christian vision and values are a living reality pupils' academic attainment and progress have improved rapidly. They are now at least in line with national averages and in reading and mathematics, are above. The headteacher's personal faith commitment, resilience and drive has rooted the school's core purpose for excellence within a strong and vibrant Christian ethos. As a result the school meets the needs of all learners. Children articulate that the adopted values come from the Bible. They explain that the school values help them to make, 'the right decisions'. Attendance is currently above national average because pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents are proud of the school. Those new to the school speak of the warm welcome, care and compassion shown to their children and the wider family. Governors and staff have a clear understanding of spirituality and this is effectively communicated to pupils through collective worship, RE and a rich and varied curriculum. For example, pupils and parents recounted with passion a performance of The Tempest which was held in the outdoor amphitheatre. Spiritual development is enhanced through the use of this area to support outdoor worship. There are good links with the local church and the incumbent and her team regularly lead acts of worship. Opportunities for collective worship in church is valued by pupils as, 'a treat'. The behaviour of pupils is excellent and relationships throughout the school community are outstanding. Pupils say that there is no bullying and recorded incidents of prejudiced bullying are minimal. This is explicitly attributed to the school's Christian values. 'The values are a living reality' was a common comment used by parents and governors. A parent of a pupil with additional needs spoke movingly of how they as parents are kept fully informed of the child's well-being and progress in school. They also value the high degree of support and care given to the family.

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

Worship takes place daily, usually as a whole school. It makes a significant impact on school life and pupils show that they appreciate the time they spend together. They prefer to worship as a whole school because 'then we are like one big family'. Worship fully supports pupils' spiritual development. Pupils understand the importance of prayer in their lives and value time given for personal reflection. On occasions, pupils contribute their own prayers in worship. Worship makes a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development as seen in pupils' exemplary behaviour in and around school and towards one another. Worship experiences deepen pupils' awareness of the additional values of perseverance, honesty, wisdom, caring and forgiveness in addition to the core values. This wider understanding of Christian values is seen to permeate the life of the school. Participation and engagement of the children is evident during acts of collective worship. Long term planning is in place and covers key events and festivals although specific links to Biblical teaching are not always explicit. Some evaluation takes place but this is informal and remains an area for further development. Pupils display confidence in understanding acts of worship, saying, 'It changes the way we do things in life'. The prayer of St Gilbert is both said and signed at the start of each act of worship after the candle has been lit to, 'welcome Christ into the room'. Children feel that worship gives, 'messages telling you what to do in life.' The content of worship is good but opportunities for pupils to be active participants in the planning, presentation and evaluation of acts of worship are under-developed. This is because a key focus for development from the previous inspection has not been fully met. Pupils have an age appropriate awareness of the Trinity and know that, 'God is always there'.

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

The RE subject leader who is also the headteacher, displays commitment and dedication. Her clear Christian purpose and sense of direction ensures that RE has a high profile in the school. Assessment

and tracking of RE shows that standards and progress are in line with national expectations. Pupils reflect on their achievements and make progress in line with other subjects in their written work and in their oral responses. Teachers are not yet fully confident in assessing RE, particularly when pupils are learning from religion. The subject leader provides informed and valued support to other teachers and ensures monitoring is carried out through a range of activities. Monitoring ensures an appropriate balance between learning about and learning from religion. School records show that the quality of teaching is good which is confirmed in inspection. Teachers' marking does not always give clear guidance on informing pupils of next steps which are related to specific skills in RE. There is also a lack of consistency from teachers when challenging pupils in their work through high expectations. Classroom and corridor displays contribute well to ensure that the subject has high prominence within the school. Pupils have a very good knowledge of the Bible and the life of Jesus. In Upper Key Stage 2, they know and understand that, 'RE is unique to other lessons because it relates to life and to our school'. Pupils study other faiths as well as Christianity which is beginning to develop their global outlook. This enables pupils to gain a deeper understanding of their own and other cultures, preparing them for life in our diverse global society. Governors are not, as yet, fully involved in a formal process of monitoring and evaluation of RE. This area of the curriculum is making a significant contribution to pupils' SMSC development.

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

Through her strong personal Christian faith, the headteacher articulates with passion and commitment a clear vision explicitly rooted in Christian values. She is inspirational in her approach so that this vision is understood and shared by all, ensuring that a cohesive and inclusive community is created. The unshakable belief that pupils are made in God's image places the uniqueness of each child at the heart of school improvement. Parents recognise and greatly value, 'the nurturing and caring capacity of the school' which extends beyond the school gates and reaches families and the community. This reflects the school's determined approach to inclusion and diversity, ensuring that all pupils are valued whatever their ability or disability. Christian worship, values and RE make a significant contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. This is shown in pupils' attitudes and respect towards others. Governors have become increasingly proactive and insightful in their knowledge of the school, providing both challenge and support for leaders. This has steered the school through a difficult period but has also ensured its recent successes. There is now a church school distinctiveness development plan in place which identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. However, this is in its very early stages. Leadership of RE and collective worship is good. Targeted staff development, particularly in the assessment of RE, will further raise the quality of teaching and learning. The school has not fully addressed all the development points from the previous inspection. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are proud of their school. Pupils see their fundraising as a means of 'living their Christianity'. Parents are highly supportive of the school saying, 'there is nowhere else like this school' and 'children are happy and celebrated and it's ok to make mistakes'.

SIAMS report November 2015 St Gilbert of Sempringham Church of England Primary School, Pointon, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 0NA