

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Epping Upland C of E Primary School**

Carters Lane

Epping Green

Essex CM16 6QJ

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex

Dates of inspection: 1st March 2013

Date of last inspection: May 7th 2008

School's unique reference number: 115097

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Hurwood

Inspector's name and number: Graham Lancaster 713

### **School context**

Epping Upland C E Primary School is a voluntary controlled church school. Although it is smaller than average there has been a recent growth in pupil numbers. The majority of children are white British and the percentage of children with special educational needs is well below the national average. The majority of children come from the local area. Considerable improvements have been made to the school building recently including a large extension, an improved ICT suite and a room for small group work and the SEAL programme (social and emotional aspects of learning). The headteacher, deputy headteacher, Chair of Governors and incumbent were in post at the time of the last inspection.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Epping Upland C of E Primary School as a Church of England school are good**

Although the overall outcome of the inspection mirrors that of 2008, areas for development have been addressed and significant improvements have taken place. The school is a welcoming, friendly and supportive community. Pupils speak confidently on Christian matters and enthusiastically about collective worship, charitable giving and RE lessons. Staff and governors contribute effectively in promoting the core values of the school.

### **Established strengths**

- Relationships between all members of the school community are very positive and based on high levels of respect and care for one another.
- The SEAL programme is making a significant difference to the well-being and opportunities for success of the more vulnerable pupils and those experiencing transitory difficulties.
- The leadership of the school as a church school is effective and is distributed across members of both the staff and the Governing Body.

### **Focus for development**

- To carry out an evaluation of collective worship involving all sections of the school community with the aim of enhancing current arrangements.
- To raise the profile of the Christian distinctiveness of the school within the school environment, including the hall.
- To provide places both inside and outside the school building for quiet reflection and spiritual contemplation.

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

Expectations and standards of achievement are high. Core values underpin the life of the school. This can be seen in relationships between children and staff throughout the school which are very warm and positive indeed. Pupils are able to make some links between these positive attributes and Christian values. "We know that God is there to help us on our way, we don't have to do it alone." "When we were talking about bullying we looked at the life of Jesus". There is, however, scope for strengthening their understanding of the Christian foundations of their school.

Pupils of all ages enjoy school and see the size of the school as a real strength and value knowing everyone by name. They consciously look out for one another and appreciate opportunities the school provides for them to work together. Adults take the time to get to know and speak to pupils beyond those

in their classes.

Pupils have been instrumental in identifying charities to support and in planning fund raising activities. They are aware of a duty of care for those less fortunate. This was particularly evident in conversations relating to charitable links with Swaziland and the local "Streets2Homes" project. As one pupil wrote "We don't know how lucky we are. Let's do something to help, they really, I mean really need it".

The, moral, social and cultural development of all children is excellent but opportunities for them to explore and grow in the spiritual dimension of life are less well developed at this time.

The internal environment is attractive and stimulating but pupils do not readily identify the relatively few Christian signs, symbols or artefacts currently in evidence. A prayer is focal point in a display of the development of the new building. In some classrooms displays reflect good RE teaching taking place. They are used to support pupils' social, moral and spiritual development. The SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) programme is also delivered effectively and is encouraged and supported by all staff. A growing range of activities and interventions are premised on meeting the needs of more vulnerable pupils or those experiencing difficulties. The Christian values of the school are seen as "lived out" within this programme.

Parents feel welcomed in school, well informed and able to contribute effectively in a variety of ways.

They particularly appreciate the strength of relationships between staff and pupils and the approachability of all staff. They welcome the new initiative to provide pupils with a simple Bible story book on entry to the school. The school is seen as a clear focal point for the community and links between the school and church are strong. They feel that the school is inclusive and welcomes pupils from all faith backgrounds and none.

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

Collective worship is valued by pupils and the staff. All staff and several visitors including the incumbent, another local minister and the chair of governors, contribute to the leadership, drawing on their expertise and enthusiasm. Pupils are enthusiastic about assemblies and appreciate the variety; "you never know quite what to expect..... we learn new things.... we like the visitors". They sing with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment. They listen very well and respond readily to questions which are well differentiated for all ages. Although they have learned the Lord's prayer and some classes have worked on their own versions, in conversation they are unsure about its origin or original context. Staff lead a class based reflection session weekly, which is based on topical matters, issues raised by the pupils or takes the form of a Bible story and discussion. This is valued as a "special time," particularly by older pupils. Although a bunch of daffodils was a focal point during the assembly observed, for St David's Day, there is no clear focal point for worship in the school hall. Pupils have responsibilities for setting up the hall, controlling the music etc and many willingly participate but there is no indication of regular pupil leadership eg in reading prayers. Services in the Church, which are aligned with festivals in the Anglican calendar, are very well supported by parents. As yet parents attend assemblies in school infrequently. Coordination is shared between the deputy headteacher and RE subject leader. They share the view of the headteacher that although there are considerable strengths in the current arrangements an evaluation and consideration of some changes would be timely, particularly in the overall structure. In preparation for this an investment has been made in Values for Life resources. As yet pupils and parents do not have the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation and future planning of collective worship.

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

The headteacher is passionate about the core values that she has actively promoted and developed throughout her time in the school. These are drawn from a Christian foundation but, as yet, there is limited manifestation of overt links between the strengths in the school as a community and its Christian roots. The areas for development identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. Leadership is distributed, both within the staff and governing body. The RE subject leader is clear that the evidence for the quality of teaching and learning in RE lies beyond the literacy or artistic skills of the pupils. She has carried out climate walks and looked at books to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. From these activities she is able to evidence that planning for RE has improved and staff have developed greater confidence and creativity in the teaching of RE. The Chair of Governors and incumbent actively participate in the life of the school and promote increasingly strong links with the local church. Parents report that the school is regarded as "the heart of the local community". Governors and senior school leaders have actively sought ways to strengthen these links. Other governors also take an active interest in the Christian dimension of school life. The leadership team have confidence and willingness to address areas of development and embrace new ideas.