

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Peter in Eastgate Church of England Controlled Infant School

Greetwellgate
Lincoln
LN2 4AW

Diocese: Lincoln

Local authority: Lincolnshire

Date of inspection: 20 June 2014

Date of last inspection: 10 June 2009

School's unique reference number: 120560

Headteacher: Mrs Julia Marshall

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Lizzie McWhirter MA 244

School context

St Peter's in Eastgate is a small infant school in the city of Lincoln. Currently, there are 90 pupils on roll, who are mainly from a White British background, with a proportion of pupils from Eastern European as well as minority ethnic backgrounds. The headteacher has been in post since April 2007. This school is part of a collaborative partnership with five other schools in the city, comprising a number of different faith schools as well as community schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter in Eastgate as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The dedication and commitment of the leadership team to support the needs of every child, enabling them to flourish within a secure Christian environment.
- The core Christian values owned by everyone which enable these young pupils to succeed above expectation.
- The welcoming, inclusive Christian ethos, creating a supportive and loving family community to which everyone is proud to belong.

Areas to improve

- Embed the ownership of worship by involving the children in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship to ensure best quality worship at all times.
- Establish a forum for pupils and clergy to discuss together the deep questions of faith and life.

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

St Peter's in Eastgate Infant School sustains an excellent, rich, diverse and exciting learning environment where its young pupils are proud to belong, feel valued and achieve highly. This is because the school strives to be a happy, caring community rooted in a Christian environment.

Data shows that pupils achieve significantly above the national average in mathematics, reading and writing. This has been true for the last five years, with moderation taking place with the junior school in Westgate. The school attributes this excellent data to the pastoral care and respect which underpin all school life and practice. Parents too acknowledge the benefits of the school's pastoral care and wellbeing. Attendance is good and exclusions rare in this infant school where there are procedures in place for challenging children. This is because the school takes the approach of working with families and meeting the needs of individual children wherever they can. An excellent example of the school going the extra mile is that the deputy head runs a course on how to read with your children, which parents say makes them feel special. With this amazing start in life, these young children flourish. Behaviour is exemplary in this school where kingdom values of friendship, courage, peace, respect, responsibility and justice are clearly lived out. Parents attest to the excellent Christian standards here where these young individuals are 'taught to have responsibility for their own learning and achievement'. Parents go on to say that programmes are refined and adjusted for each child alongside 'encouragement and positivity so they are ready for junior school'. Parents also value the 'close connection' they and their children have with the teachers every day together with 'the bond between the children beyond their years as a school family'. This extends to pupils knowing the names of all the children. Learning is aspirational here, not just academic, with a wide range of achievement valued. Pupils here feel able to make a positive contribution through, for example, sport, music or gardening. They experience the Christian values of service and generosity through fundraising activities. Such activities also enhance their understanding of their place in the world and their responsibility to others. Pupils show respect for the diverse community they belong to. This enhanced by their links with a school in Oldham as well as visits to their parish church and Lincoln Cathedral, richly supports their spiritual development. Indeed, the Infant Cathedral Days provide active play workshops which 'help me with my life'. A very good example of learning from The Parable of The Lost Sheep allows children to reflect and say, 'God is not holding the world so tightly that we can't go and explore'. Moreover, such young pupils really enjoy their religious education [RE] and say, 'RE is the most fun of all the lessons we have' and 'In RE we learn about religions and what those different religions believe'. These young children have a well-developed theological literacy and have the language and vocabulary, for example, to express the different ways in which Muslims and Christians pray, as well as the symbolism of bread and wine. They can clearly articulate key Christian concepts such as salvation and sacrifice in their own words. Pupils speak of Ascension as 'Jesus went into a cloud, to heaven' and Pentecost as 'everyone understanding each other from different lands'. Pupils and clergy welcome the opportunity to discuss together the deep questions of faith and life in order to maintain excellence in RE and engage and enrich these young pupils' lives and their spiritual development. Pupils value their school grounds with its weaving tree for prayers and thoughts as well as growing fruit and vegetables in their raised beds and welcome being involved in the design and use of a newly planned quiet space for reflection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The attitude of these young pupils to collective worship is excellent because the inspirational and creative experiences offered to them in worship are making a real difference in their lives and the lives of their families. Quality prayerful and meaningful worship takes place daily, greatly enhancing their spiritual development. Such young pupils can name the three persons of The Holy Trinity and their work, saying, 'God looks after the world and he created the world, Jesus died for us so we could live and The Holy Spirit helps us on earth instead of up in heaven'. Pupils are able to reflect on the 'stories of Peter, one of Jesus' most famous followers' after whom their school and parish church is named. Indeed, after actively exploring such advanced themes such as Peter's dream and 'Pilgrim's Progress' through drama, pupils can make the connection between the stories and their own young lives, saying, 'you can change your lives by your behaviour'. Pupils value prayer immensely, saying 'my favourite bit in worship is saying the prayer all together'. Prayers include The Lord's Prayer as well as a

specially written prayer and song for lighting the candle, written by a colleague from St Faith's Infant School and the Bishop's Visitor. Indeed, The Candle Song helps pupils to understand 'God's light and power within us; that's The Trinity and Christ within us, giving us the power'. They make the link with their kingdom values saying that 'praying to God gives you courage to do the right thing'. Pupil voice is valued here where currently pupil evaluation on worship is gathered by staff. Pupils welcome writing down their ideas on worship as well as 'making a chart to say which day to do what things' and taking on regular responsibility for planning and leading worship. The school has rightly identified for this to be extended to all groups of children. This is welcomed by governors as part of their monitoring and evaluative role in maintaining integrity in worship. Pupil ownership of worship is modelled by the RE subject leader whose Year1 children lead class collective worship, with time to say their own prayers at the end of the day, 'praising and thanking God'. Pupils experience worship led by a variety of leaders including staff, clergy and their Bishop's Visitor. The clergy team as well as their Bishop's Visitor are welcome weekly visitors to school and 'inject the teaching into liturgy for these young children'. The re-ordered St Peter's Church is well used and an excellent resource for key festivals in the church year as well as worship activities such as 'Easter experience through Peter's eyes'. A high number of parents attend worship in church. Worship has taken place outdoors under a gazebo, and prayer days in school have had a focus, such as 'people who are important to us in the local community'. In all these ways, collective worship is constantly enriching the community life of this church school.

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

St Peter's in Eastgate's Christian heritage is effectively promoted by the headteacher, staff, clergy, governors and parents, and indeed by its young pupils, so that the school's Church of England foundation is celebrated. The pursuit of excellence in all school activities, within this inclusive family, is demonstrated by a highly successful drive to improve achievement or maintain the highest levels of achievement in all pupils. Thus parents ascribe this school to be 'absolutely excellent' because their children are happy and can thrive and succeed in this environment where there is 'plenty of praise', 'the values are clearly instilled' and where there are 'no barriers to learning'. Individual pupils' needs are met on every level with 'encouragement and positivity'. As a result, these young children, whose pupil voice is valued, 'grow and feel comfortable', and 'want to come and pray', secure in the knowledge that there is 'always someone there to take time out for them'. RE and worship take prominence in this school, where these key areas of school life are well led and managed. Indeed, RE leads the way with the RE subject leader leading whole themed creative cross-curricular days for the staff here, showing how RE supports and engages with other curriculum areas. In addition, she ably provides training for The Teaching School Alliance, of whom St Peter's is an integral member, to support professional development. The school has an excellent relationship with the diocese, with senior staff visiting regularly. Christian leadership, succession planning and roles and responsibilities are excellently supported through professional training and input from the diocese. Partnership links are strong, with the school trying to reach out to other schools. A very good example of this is the early opening of the school's doors to accommodate parents who also have children at Westgate Junior School in the city. Staff and governors have addressed all areas from the last inspection. Governors are strongly committed to the school's strategic development plan where church school distinctiveness is not a separate agenda item, but woven through and integral to the school's planning. However, foundation governors welcome church school distinctiveness becoming a standing item every time they meet in order to raise this important profile with all their fellow governors. In all these ways, this school works as a dedicated and committed team, serving these young pupils and their families.