

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Southminster Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Burnham Road

Southminster

Essex

CM0 7ES

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex

Date of inspection: Tuesday 12th June 2012

Date of last inspection: 8th July 2009

School's unique reference number: 8813836

Headteacher: Mrs. Karen Harden

Inspector's name and number: Iain Gunn 727

School context

The school is a slightly smaller than average primary school. It is split onto two sites after two separate schools were amalgamated in 2007. The pupils are predominately white British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average however the proportion of pupils with educational needs is higher than average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Southminster as a Church of England school is good

Southminster is an effective church school. It is a place where explicit Christian values are evident in the environment and also the actions of the adults and children. It is a place where the children are extremely well cared for and where they feel safe and listened too. The strong links with the local church enhances the distinctiveness of the school as a place of spiritual development.

Established strengths

- The support that is given, through extra provision, to pupils who are having difficulties.
- Christian Values encourage, nurture and challenge the children.
- The very positive relationships between the staff, parents, local church and governors.

Focus for development

- To further develop the monitoring and evaluation in the school and then use this information to write the development plan.
- To develop the collective worship schedule to allow for more focus to be given to the gospel values so the children are clear about the distinction between life skills.

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

The school is based around a clear set of Christian values which positively effect the actions of the children and adults. These values influence the ethos of the school and add to its distinctiveness. There are many Christian, signs and symbols around the school that affirm that this is a church school. An issue from the last inspection was to develop the school environment. This has been achieved with the design and development of a reflective garden, which was opened by the Bishop Stephen. The children spoke with great enthusiasm about his visit and also about their garden saying it was a place they could go to calm down and think. There is also a beautiful prayer board that the pupils use regularly. The children can write that they want their prayer shared in assembly or keep them private. One child said, 'being able to write prayers helps me when I am worried'

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Considerable resources have been allocated to ensure that the pupils are well cared for. A pupil reported, 'The Early Risers Club helps me to calm down when I get wound up and it has stopped me getting into trouble'. The pupils explained that the friendship stops in the playground were effective in making sure that no one was lonely, a boy who was relatively new to the school said, 'the friendship stops helped me when I joined the school. I was lonely and someone came and played with me, they are now my friend'. The religious education(RE) curriculum gives the pupils appropriate opportunities to understand their role locally, nationally and also globally, this makes the pupils understand difference and also the need to help others through the various charities which they are proud to raise money for. The pupils feel listened to and say that they can go to any adult if they have a problem and that problems are quickly and fairly resolved. The parents also agreed with this.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Pupils are positive about collective worship and are particularly enthusiastic about singing where they enjoy songs with actions. The majority of pupils are engaged during the worship. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to ensure that the pupils take a more active role in the worship. This is seen in the way that children now write and perform prayers, readings. They also run the Thursday assembly .This needs to be slightly altered so it is more an act of worship rather than a traditional show and tell assembly. The great variety of speakers is confirmation of the close links with the church and local community and greatly adds to the quality and depth of worship at the school. There is a little confusion between the life skills from the curriculum and the core gospel values of the school. The values need to be the vehicle that drives the collective worship. The worship is Anglican in character and the children are familiar with a range of Anglican traditions. The worship is clearly planned and a record is kept, however, there is little formal evaluation of the worship. The worship influences the thinking of the pupils. One boy responded that; God was omnipresent and it did not matter where you were in the world when you worshipped. This was a direct result of listening to the worship in the morning.

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

School Leaders have a clear vision of how Christian values influence school life and have built in review times so that children are involved in reviewing the core values. Pupils, parents, governors and staff speak highly of the headteacher who is a good listener and always has time for them. There is a good partnership between the school and the parish church of St Leonard's. This partnership is further strengthened with the joint work the school and parish carry out, with the head and vicar recently returning from a trip to a church and school in Kenya. Displays of the visit are around school and it was also a feature of the collective worship. A parent describes the school as a hub between the school and church. The vertical streaming in the mornings gives the school a real family feel and helps the children to work cooperatively. Parents find staff approachable and say they feel welcome. The school goes the extra mile to ensure that pupils who are having difficulties are cared for. There are extra support clubs that run before and during school. One pupil said that Dino club had really helped them to find and keep friends. A parent commented that the club had helped their child grow in confidence. Monitoring takes place by the Governors in the form of termly visits. There are distinct action plans for RE and Worship and there is some evidence of middle management monitoring however this needs further development. The issues identified at last inspection have been addressed.

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