



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bulphan Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Fen Lane
Bulphan
Essex
RM14 3RL

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Thurrock

Dates of inspection: 24th October 2013

Date of last inspection: 27th May 2010

School's unique reference number: 115092

Headteacher: Miss Laura Fishleigh

Inspector's name and number: Julie Gibbons 739

School context

Bulphan Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller than average school with three mixed aged classes. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, or speaking English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action or school action plus is broadly average. The school has experienced turbulence in its leadership. The current headteacher appointed in April 2012 has been the ninth post-holder in twelve years

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bulphan as a Church of England school are good

- The leadership of the headteacher, leadership team, governors and their commitment to further improvement.
- The school has strong and supportive relationships underpinned by Christian values
- The strong and effective partnership between the school and the local church which enables the school community to develop their understanding of aspects of Anglican tradition and supports the school's distinctive Christian character
- Pupil led worship which focuses on the schools Christian values and includes specific teachings about Jesus' life

Areas to improve

- To develop all stakeholders understanding of the school's values as Christian values and their Christian origins and the impact these Christian values have on their spiritual development.
- To develop self evaluation to include all stakeholders

- To enhance pupils spiritual development through increased opportunities for pupils to reflect on acts of worship
- To further develop prayer within the school community with a focus on the distinction between private and public prayer

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

Bulphan is a very happy, caring school where the school's Christian values have a significant impact on the school's daily life. Members of the community care about each other and pupils are happy and enthusiastic to be in school. The school's Christian ethos where every child is highly valued underpins its approaches to attendance and exclusions and its work with vulnerable individuals. This can be seen in school's attendance figures which are broadly in line with the national average and exclusions rates which are low. The Christian character of the school has a positive influence on pupils' confidence and attitudes to learning. Recent data shows that learners' achievement is good in core subjects with most pupils making at least expected progress and many making more than expected progress. The review of the school's Christian values by governors and staff in 2010 has enabled the school to have a shared understanding of its five key core values. The headteacher and her leadership team have worked hard in developing them and they are now beginning to be embedded. This is seen in the way they are displayed in the school and in classrooms and are a focal point for the school community. Children know what these values are and most are able to describe the impact these values have on their daily lives and their learning. A year 4 pupil said, 'God cares and loves us'. The impact of the school's core values is also seen in the quality of relationships in the school which are good. Staff have a very good working relationship and work well together to address whole school issues. This is strength of the school; pupils however, cannot always articulate the links between the values and their Christian origins. RE supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is given a high profile through colourful displays. Pupils spoke of how their thoughts and feelings were valued and how they enjoyed their RE lessons and particularly enjoyed their visits to the church to take part in services. There is an active pupil council and year 6 prefect system. This has enabled pupils to take on responsibilities and has contributed to the school community's understanding of Christian values and service. The school promotes respect for diversity through the wide range of colourful displays and artefacts around the school. The school environment also makes a major contribution to the spiritual development of all learners. Children talk enthusiastically about the school's outside 'Reflection area' where they can sit quietly with a friend or enjoy a book. Parents are fully supportive of the school. They are very happy that their children attend and are very keen to share their views. Parents said, 'Bulphan is welcoming, respectful and warm', and 'I wish everyone could experience an environment like this'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is clearly an area which is important to the school because it has been a focus for development since the last inspection. Changes implemented by the headteacher and leadership team have had a positive impact on its quality. Assembly themes which now focus on the school's five key Christian values are well planned and include specific teachings about Jesus' life which are taught through bible stories and hymns. Worship has a strong Christian focus and major Christian festivals are celebrated, both in school and in church. Pupils spoke of how much they enjoyed taking part in the recent Harvest service in church and spoke enthusiastically about the Harvest displays around the school. Children enjoy planning and leading weekly acts of worship. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is carried out informally by leaders and formally by the worship governor but not by pupils. The atmosphere created by the music and foci used is appropriate and helps prepare the school for the act of worship. Pupils are attentive and keen to participate. They enjoy singing a variety of hymns. One pupil said, 'We sing to Jesus, it makes me feel calm and relaxed'. The school has very strong links

with the local church. The rector regularly leads worship in school and children contribute to services at the church at Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the end of the year. This helps develop the school community's understanding of the cycle of the church year. Both children and parents speak highly of how much they enjoy these services. The school is beginning to use services, the Ash Wednesday service in particular to relate the Holy Trinity to practical every day experiences. Prayer has become a more important part in the daily life of the school. Prayers are said before lunch and at the end of the school day. Each class now has their own book of prayers which they have written. Pupils spoke of how special these prayers were to them and how they are shared in class and whole school acts of worship. A prayer and worry box located near the entrance hall invites pupils to write their own personal prayers and worries. However, it is not clear to children where they might offer prayers that are personal and confidential and how these are different from more public prayers. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is carried out informally by leaders and formally by the worship governor but not by pupils. This has led to clear improvements in the quality of worship including pupil's use of key Anglican responses such as 'The Lord be with you'.

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

The headteacher has a strong vision for the school and has worked hard with governors, staff and pupils to share this vision. Progress has been made over the past three years and the headteacher and staff are committed to maintaining this improvement. In response to an area for development from the last inspection the head, staff and governors have reviewed the school values which are now made explicit and enhance and support all areas of the curriculum. The school is beginning to provide more opportunities for explicit links to be made between the school's values and their Christian origins and as a result pupils are beginning to be able to articulate these links. The school has a strong partnership with the local church. The rector of Bulphan church is actively involved with the school leading assemblies and involving pupils in church services. This helps to develop children's understanding of aspects of the Anglican tradition and supports the school's distinctive Christian character. The school also works in partnership with the two other Church of England Primary schools in the local area. This provides an effective support network and opportunities to share good practice. This can be seen in the recent shared moderation of RE lesson. This has given the school the opportunity to develop links with the wider community. The governing body has worked supportively with the headteacher and whole staff to enhance the Christian vision of the school. Developing the school's distinctiveness as a church school is a key area in the school's development plan and, as a result, achievement and distinctiveness have improved since the last inspection. Half termly observations in each classroom by the collective worship leader have led to greater staff confidence in implementing the school's Christian values across the curriculum. Staff are supported in their roles through continued professional development which can be seen in the administration assistants attendance at the recent day of retreat at Pleshey House. The school includes some stakeholders in the self evaluation it undertakes but now needs to involve all stakeholders including pupils and parents in order to further develop its distinctive Christian character. It is clear that all the staff work very well as a team and are fully supportive of the headteacher. This gives the school a strong capacity to improve even further.

SIAMS report October 2013 Bulphan Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Bulphan, Upminster, Essex RM14 3RL