

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Dedham Church of England Primary school,
Parson's Field,
Dedham
Colchester
Essex.
CO7 6BZ**

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex

Dates of inspection: 24th October 2012

Date of last inspection: 16th January 2008

School's unique reference number: 115076

Headteacher: Mrs Heather Tetchner

Inspector's name and number: Julie Gibbons 739

School context

Dedham is a small primary school serving the local community. It has seven classes. It is a popular school which parents speak very highly of. Approximately a third of the pupils come from surrounding villages. The school benefits from close links with the local church and community.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dedham Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

The school is very well led and managed by a committed headteacher who is fully supported by a highly effective staff team and governing body. The whole school is committed to upholding the very strong Christian ethos which underpins all aspects of school life. This enables pupils to make very good progress both academically and spiritually. All members of the school community are valued, and relationships are based on mutual trust and respect.

Established strengths

- The leadership of the headteacher, governors and leadership team and their commitment to further improvement
- The strong and supportive relationships underpinned by Christian values, which permeate all aspects of school life
- The strong and effective partnership between the school, the local church and the wider community

Focus for development

- To enhance pupils spiritual development through greater involvement of pupils in acts of worship and increased opportunities for pupils to reflect on acts of worship

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

Dedham is a very happy, caring school where the school's Christian values through their WE WISH statements underpin all aspects of the school's daily life. A year 6 pupil said, 'Each child tries to enhance the WE WISH statements'. All members of the community care about each other and pupils are happy and enthusiastic to be in school. The headteacher, governors and her leadership team have worked hard to develop the school's Christian values. The school values are displayed in the school and in classrooms and they are a focal point for the school community. It is clear that children and parents know what these values are and that they have an impact on the children's daily lives and their learning. Pupils and parents are able to articulate the impact of these values. A reception class pupil said, 'God helps us to learn and to help other people', another pupil said, 'Our values help us to live like Jesus and make the right choices like Jesus'. Relationships in the school are very good between governors, staff and children. This is a significant strength of the school. Staff have a very good working relationship and work well together to address whole school issues. Children's exemplary behaviour contributes to the very warm and positive atmosphere in the school. Class 1 demonstrated well their ability to work together, to listen to each other, to take turns and their respect for one another's views in a religious education lesson observed. RE supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and is greatly enhanced through the schools involvement in the 'Godly Play' project. Pupils spoke of how their thoughts and feelings were valued and how they enjoyed responding in a creative way during their 'Godly Play' sessions. There are many examples of the schools values being lived out in children's politeness by opening doors for adults, older pupils helping younger pupils and

willingness to talk to adults in a very thoughtful and open way. There is an enthusiastic pupil council who through their work have initiated changes which has included the refurbishments of the toilets and changes to the lunch menu. The school's very strong links with Gatunduri School in Kenya contribute to the school communities understanding about Christian values and service. 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, 'I wouldn't want my children to go anywhere else', 'School, church and community in harmony, helping my child grow'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is clearly an area which is very important to the school because it has been a focus for development since the last inspection. Many of the changes implemented by the headteacher and leadership team have had a very positive impact on its quality. Assembly themes which focus on the current WE WISH statement are well planned. The atmosphere created by the music and foci used is appropriate and helps prepare the school for the act of worship. Pupils are attentive during the act of worship and are keen to participate. Pupils enjoy singing a variety of hymns. A recent pupil perception survey showed that pupils would welcome taking an even more active role in assemblies through role play, acting and sharing more of the prayers they have written. Children look forward to the termly Eucharist service that Canon Pat leads in school. Pupils are happy to share the impact these services have on them. One pupil said 'When I came out I thought, wow I really need to improve on things.' Another said 'I need to be wise in the little things'. The school has very strong links with the local church. Children lead 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 and how special they are. One parent commented, 'I love being at services and have been moved to tears'. Prayer is very important in the daily life of the school. Prayers are said before lunch in all classes which are led by the pupils. Pupils freely share how they enjoy writing and sharing prayers and the importance of prayer to them. Pupils took an active part in a recent worship review which resulted in changes to the timing and length of the Friday celebration assembly. Parents are given the opportunity to evaluate acts of worship through a feedback form. Pupils' feedback and evaluation of worship is valued. All feedback is taken into account in future planning and provision.

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

The headteacher has a strong vision for the school and has worked hard with governors to involve staff and the school community in sharing this vision. Progress has been made across many areas since the last inspection and the headteacher and staff are committed to maintaining this improvement. The whole school has been involved in reviewing the school values and has undertaken a spirituality review. The school values are made explicit and are used to enhance and support all areas of the curriculum. The school is committed to ensuring that opportunities for explicit links to be made between the school's values and their Christian origins continue to be a priority. The school has a very strong partnership with the local church and clergy. The vicar of Dedham has been actively involved with the school through being a member of the governing body, leading assemblies, involving pupils in church services and spending time in school. The school also benefits from the work of Canon Pat Prestney and Reverend Gill Moore through their assemblies and puppet ministry which the pupils speak very highly of. This helps children's understanding of aspects of the Anglican tradition and supports the school's distinctive Christian character. The governing body has worked very supportively with the headteacher and whole staff to support the Christian vision of the school. This is seen in the way that they were actively involved in the review of the school's values, the prayer day and ongoing monitoring of worship. Governors have a high profile in school and their presence at acts of worship is welcomed by the school community. The school includes all stakeholders in the self evaluation it undertakes. This has clearly been seen in its recent reviews of spirituality, worship and the school's distinctiveness as a church school. Issues identified from these reviews are in the process of being addressed. They include more information being given to parents on assembly themes, Godly Play and the RE curriculum. It is clear that all the staff work very well as a team, are very supportive of each other, are passionate about teaching and learning and fully supportive of the headteacher. This gives the school a strong capacity to improve even further.