

Dr Walker's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Walker Avenue
Fyfield
Essex
CM5 0RG

Diocese: CHELMSFORD

Local authority: Essex
Date of inspection: 27th September 2012
Date of last inspection: 7th May 2009
School's unique reference number: 115125
Headteacher: Wendy Myers
Inspector's name and number: Andrew Binnell N665

School context

Dr Walker's is a smaller-than-average primary school. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic heritages and none speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much fewer than that found nationally. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special education needs is greater than found in most primary schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dr Walker's as a Church of England school is good

This is a good church school. Dr Walker's is a happy, caring school where the Christian values underpin daily life. All members of the community care about each other and pupils are happy and enthusiastic to be in school. The school has responded well to the areas for development identified at the last church school inspection.

Established strengths

- The Headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders and the Incumbent, provides very strong and effective direction to the church school.
- Christian values underpin all relationships across the school. This is apparent between adults, between adults and pupils and between learners.
- The centrality of collective worship to all aspect of school life.

Focus for development

- Further develop the school environment to add to the school's Christian character.
- Further develop the collective worship and religious education (RE) provision accessed by children in order to nourish and challenge their spiritual development.
- Build on the collective worship provision accessed by children by providing pupils with more opportunities to lead worship and to introduce a cycle of assemblies perhaps over a 2-year period

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

The Christian ethos of the school has strengthened since the 2009 church school inspection. Pupils are more secure in the knowledge that their thoughts and beliefs are valued. They show respect and consideration for each other and this is evidenced through the very strong relationships seen between pupils, between pupils and adults, and between adults. Older children support the needs of younger children, with examples seen in the classroom, out on the playground and in the hall during collective worship, with older pupils, taking on monitorial duties. The school environment is well cared for both within the school but also outside, with the school having really attractive grounds. Recent internal remodelling has provided a bright

and welcoming new entrance area to the school. Attractive RE displays are found in and out of classrooms. In the school entrance there is the school motto, the school vision statement, a book of prayers and some prayer beads, all of which contribute to a real enhancement of the internal school environment since the last church school inspection. It is suggested that this could be further developed to add to the school's Christian character. Developments might include more examples of Christian imagery within classrooms, in walkways, in the school hall and at the external front entrance of the school. These additions would add to the overall school environment and would contribute to the school's aspiration to enhance the spiritual development of its pupils through the provision of these resources. Religious Education makes a very positive contribution to the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. It is highly valued as a subject by all members of school team who teach the subject highly effectively. The subject coordinator provides effective leadership which has resulted in many positive developments in this area since the last church school inspection.

The impact of collective worship on the school is good

Collective worship now has a place of central importance in the life of this church school. Pupils experience a variety of worship over the course of the school week with each assembly having a different focus, whilst at the same time, building on the central termly theme. Pupils speak positively about the worship they engage with, particularly enjoying the celebration assembly at the end of each school week. All pupils were absorbed in the collective worship observed during the inspection. The friendship theme caught the attention of those present, was well resourced and had very good levels of pupil participation. High quality systems are now in place at the school to ensure the consistent delivery of high quality worship for pupils on a daily basis. These include clear expectations for pupils' entry to and exit from the hall, a focus for worship, clear expectations for good resourcing, pupils taking on monitorial responsibilities, and all members of the staff team to be present. The school is encouraged to build on this good approach through providing pupils with more opportunities to lead worship and to introduce a cycle of assemblies perhaps over a 2-year period. Both of these would add to the provision accessed by children and would help, over time, to nourish and challenge their spiritual development.

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

The headteacher provides highly effective leadership to the school which is recognised by all members of the school community. This was evident in discussions with the school council, with one member stating that 'Mrs Myers has really helped our school improve.' The school leadership has tackled the areas for development identified at the last church school inspection and ensured that they have good coverage in the school development plan. The school leadership has brought together key stakeholders to work in partnership and has ensured that Christian values underpin church school improvement. The Headteacher has been well supported by senior leaders of the school and the highly valued Incumbent. Governors, led by a highly effective chair, provide appropriate support and challenge. Key governors and senior school leaders have been actively involved in updating the school self-evaluation document and evaluating their school against the published criteria. Progress made by the school on its priorities has been regularly monitored by these key governors. Effective links have been developed between the Church and the school, with the Parish Church now being used regularly for both worship and as a resource to support the wider school curriculum. This enables the pupils develop an understanding of aspects Anglican tradition and practice.

The school is now in a very good position to evolve further from this very firm foundation and to respond effectively and with confidence to the three areas for development identified.