

**Fingringhoe Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School**

Church Road  
Fingringhoe  
Colchester  
Essex. CO5 7BN

**Diocese: Chelmsford**

LA: Essex

Dates of inspection: October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012

Date of last inspection: October 16<sup>th</sup> 2009

School's Unique reference number: 115139

Headteacher: Julia Longman

Inspector's name and number: John Baker - Inspector's Number 11

**School context**

Fingringhoe Church of England (VA) Primary School lies at the edge of the village of Fingringhoe, approximately five miles from Colchester, Almost all the 72 pupils on roll are of White British heritage. The proportion known to be entitled to free school meals is broadly average and the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also broadly average.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Fingringhoe Church of England (VA) Primary School as a church school are good**

The school's strong Christian ethos permeates everything that it does. It ensures that the school effectively meets the needs of all its pupils, enabling them to become independent learners and responsible citizens. Pupils are very well prepared for their future role in the local and wider community.

**Established strengths**

- The school's very close and supportive partnership links with the parish church of St. Andrew's and with the nearby Methodist chapel which pupils, staff, governors and others value highly.
- The overall quality of collective worship and religious education, which nurtures and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and significantly enriches the life of the school.
- The very effective Christian leadership of the school provided by the Headteacher, ably supported by her staff team, incumbent, chair of governors and other governors.

**Focus for development**

- To ensure the monitoring and evaluation by the school leadership team and governors is robust and contributes to school improvement as an Anglican church school.
- To ensure that the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment in religious education [RE] is rigorous and informs teaching and learning.

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

The school's key Christian values, which include tolerance, respect and forgiveness, influence every aspect of the school's provision and each child is viewed as a unique child of God, where everyone is valued and special. 'The school is like a whole family', said one pupil, 'full of friendly people'. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are outstanding. These are seen in the very effective support provided through the 'Church Partner' system. As a consequence, pupils feel cared for and respected and are highly motivated to do their best. Pupils, moreover, develop an understanding of the qualities needed to be responsible citizens, with a very strong emphasis placed on personal, social and health education (PSHE). They are also actively involved in a range of charities such as Samaritan's Purse in support of this. The school has very close links with the parish church and its links with the village community are strong. Although the building is limited, effective use is made of the adjacent parish church of St. Andrew's, its outdoor classroom a short walk away, and the nearby Methodist chapel. There are also beautifully hand-decorated crosses in each of the classrooms and in the main hall designed by the pupils, and displays and class prayer books. All these reinforce the Christian character of the school and support very effectively the spiritual development of pupils.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Pupils really enjoy the acts of collective worship and their attitudes are respectful and positive. Their spiritual development is strongly promoted during the school's acts of worship. Older pupils take some responsibility for assemblies, especially linked to writing and leading prayers and participating in dramatised readings and helping with the music. The Lord's Prayer is regularly said and sometimes the Caribbean Lord's Prayer is sung. Christian values, such as being kind to each other and being honest, are reinforced and the Olympic values provided a strong theme recently for worship. On Fridays the acts of worship takes place in the parish church next door. These are very special times for the pupils, staff and parents. Adults and children value this reflective space. People from the village are regularly invited to school productions, weekly church assemblies and special services, such as the school carol service. This reinforces positively the school's links with the church and the community. The incumbent and local Methodist minister are regularly involved in leading worship at the school and pupils are really enthusiastic about these occasions, which they value. Aspects of the Anglican church calendar are highlighted in worship, such as Advent, but other themes are also planned for, for example, stories from the Old Testament and other world faiths. The focus each Easter is on the Last Supper. This acts as an introduction to the communion service for the pupils. Training for staff on school worship takes place and this ensures its quality is maintained and developed.

### **The effectiveness of Religious Education is good**

Religious education [RE], with strong links with PSHE and 'philosophy for children' (P4C), has a high profile in the school and is part of the core curriculum. Standards in RE are broadly average and compare favourably with other core subjects. Assessing pupils' progress is undertaken but is not always consistent throughout the school. However, lesson observations show that good teaching, with some outstanding practice in RE, is in place. Much of the teaching and learning in RE encourages discussion and reflection so written work is sometimes limited. Pupils learn about other faiths and festivals, such as Diwali and Hanukkah, but limited opportunities are provided to interact with people from other faith communities. Across the curriculum, which is based around the Diocesan framework for RE, opportunities are provided which help nourish pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A particularly strong example of this is when 'Godly Play' is used as a method to enable pupils to reflect on the mysteries of the birth of Jesus, Easter and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This method of teaching is highly valued by the pupils and as a consequence they enjoy RE. Pupils visit different church settings as part of the RE curriculum and a range of Christian artefacts are used to support teaching and learning. This helps pupils develop their understanding of the Anglican church traditions. The school's international links with France and Ghana are promoted through RE, providing a global dimension to Christianity. RE is well led and many opportunities for professional development are provided for staff. This ensures that RE's profile as a core subject is maintained and developed.

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

Strong Christian leadership is provided by the Headteacher and governors. All staff have been involved in developing the school's vision and mission statement with school governors and a parent group. The school's Christian values are made explicit in these statements. These are modelled by the staff, which ensures that pupils know how to behave and treat one another. As one parent said, 'This school has a very nurturing environment'. Parents value this caring ethos. Foundation governors are involved in monitoring the school's provision, particularly linked to RE and collective worship. Relationships with the church and village are very positive. This is because the Rector visits the school regularly and discusses issues surrounding church and school and the place of the school in the village community. This means that barriers, if they do arise, are addressed. There is an excellent feel between school, church and village. All staff are expected to be in sympathy with the school's Christian vision and effective succession planning is in place.. The school's and Rector's relationships with the local Methodist minister are also very strong and the chapel is used for 'Messy Church' once every half term. Over one third of the school's pupils attend this regularly, which significantly strengthens the school's links with the local community. The school's self-evaluation is developing, with clear action plans in place for collective worship and RE, but foundation governors need to have a robust policy for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's Christian character. The school's capacity to improve as an Anglican church is good.