

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road
Great Yeldham,
Halstead.
CO9 4PT

Diocese of Chelmsford

Essex Local Authority
SIAS Inspection: 19th March 2013
Date of last inspection: 30th June 2009
School's unique reference number: 115069
Headteacher: Carrie Prior
SIAS Inspector: Iain Gunn 727

School context

This village school is smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils are White British with no children learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. There has been a recent change in leadership at the school after a period of challenge. The school holds several National Awards.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's School as a Church of England school is good.

St Andrew's is an effective church school. It is a place where clear values are evident not only in the environment but in the way that people respond to each other. It is a place where the children feel well cared for and safe. The new head teacher has developed strong links with the local church and community which enhances the distinctiveness of the school as a place of spiritual development.

Established strengths

- The Christian learning environment that is evident throughout the school.
- The clear Christian vision held by the leadership in the school
- The strong links with the local church.
- The pupils enjoyment of worship

Focus for development

- For the governors and head teacher to have a clear monitoring schedule in place so the impact of the new initiatives can be evaluated.

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

The school has worked very hard to establish a set of core values. These were developed alongside the whole school community. They are evident all around the school in displays both in the classrooms as well as communal areas. The children know the values and also know why the values are important and can articulate the impact they have on school life. The values in the school enhance the spiritual development of the children and show how they should treat others. One pupil said that since the new values were adopted by the school it has improved greatly and 'The children look after each other more which is our community value. Another said that they make her focus more in the lessons so she can show determination. The children feel safe and well looked after. They know that the staff listen to them and address any problems quickly and fairly. This sentiment was echoed by the parents. A parent was very grateful for the support they had received for not only their child but also for themselves during a time of challenge in the family. Another spoke very positively about the emotional first aider system in the school and its positive impact on their child. The behavior in the school is very good, with the reward system being directly linked to the six core values. The children are given certificates each week and presented with them in assembly. The children really value these but were keen to point out that they do not do things to get certificates rather they get certificates because they want to do the right thing. The parents spoke very positively about this system and particularly liked the fact that children could nominate each other for the awards. They felt this helped to strengthen the values as the children could recognise them in each other. The religious education in the school also positively contributes to the Christian character of the school. It has a high profile and is well taught and planned. The clear curriculum has a wealth of opportunities so that the children can understand their role both in their community and also in the wider world. This is due to be further enhanced further with more planned visits and visitors.

There are reflective areas in each classroom and the children could explain their purpose.

One child said that she likes to just go and read the Bible there. There are prominent religious based displays .The children are not only proud of them but understand their meaning and are able to articulate this to visitors. The parents recognise the environment as helping to develop their children spiritually and also liked the IT display in the entrance where the themes for worship and thoughts were displayed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The worship in the school is exceptionally well planned and thoroughly prepared. It is skilfully delivered so that the teachings can be transferred into the pupil's lives. The overriding strength of the worship is the way that it engages all of the pupils. This is done by the leaders using exciting material but also using a highly developed range of techniques such as response partners and pupil led worship. It has a place of major importance, and appropriately reflects the Christian foundation of the school. It responds to the needs of the school community an example of this is the change in next terms planned worship so that it will now focus on certain values so that they are fully embedded with the children. The children lead services at the local church to mark key Christian festivals such as harvest, Christmas and Easter. Which help to develop an understanding on aspects of Anglican tradition. The services are well attended by parents and greatly valued. The parents commented that they feel that these services strengthen the links between the church and the community. There are a range of different people who come into the school to deliver the worship; this contributes greatly to the pupil's engagement and enjoyment of the worship. One pupil commented that he liked the range of people as they lead it in different ways which helps him to listen. The school has a thorough planning system in place to ensure consistency of delivery. An issue from the last inspection was to ensure that the worship in the school impacts on the pupil's lives. This has been fully addressed by the school changing the time it delivers worship to first thing in the morning so that the message inspires the actions of the day. One child commented that they really liked this because it gave them something to focus on throughout the day as it reminded her about the values in the school. Another said, 'Assemblies explain to us how to act and make us want to do the right thing'. The use of prayer in the worship, with its reflection time and relevant personal messages develops a strong sense of spirituality in the school. The worship is Anglican in nature which results in pupils of all ages having a clear understanding of the traditions and symbols used. The pupils were able to explain the key symbols such as the candle representing Jesus as the light of the world, the significance of the cross and even liturgical colours. The school has recently introduced a pupil evaluation system into worship so that pupils can give instant feedback on the worship although it has just been introduced it allows the school to see which aspects of worship they enjoy and also what the children have got out of the session. This instant feedback gives a much more accurate picture on the worship in the school The pupils are fully engaged throughout the worship and speak positively about it saying that they enjoy it, particularly when they are able to act; as well as enjoying singing.

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

School leaders and Governors have a very clear vision of how distinctive Christian values are central to every aspect of school life. The new head teacher is unwavering in her belief that these are central to the life of the school and has put systems in place to ensure that they are. In fact it was one of the first things that were put into place when she took up her role. This has enabled the school to move forward at a more rapid pace as all the school can see the reason and direction that they are heading. The issues from the last inspection have been addressed with the children now much more involved in the worship and really enjoying the fact that they are. The school is developing tracking systems so that standards in religious education can be monitored and challenged. There are clear relevant and up to date policies in place in the school which help to ensure the consistency of approach across the school. The school is aware of the next steps that it needs to take to improve further it simply needs the time to be able to implement these.

The school has a very clear development plan that is monitored regularly to ensure that issues are addressed. The school has the capacity and vision to deliver the plan with all stakeholders moving in the same direction. The governing body is supportive and greatly values the school as a church school The school has developed links with the community and runs a join coffee morning with the church. The school has been grateful for the support from the diocese during this time of change and particularly felt the head teachers mentor had had a positive effect.