



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Layer de la Haye Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

High Road,
Layer de la Haye,
Colchester,
Essex,
CO2 0DS

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex
Date of inspection: 13 June 2013
Date of last inspection: 2 October 2008
School's unique reference number: 115080
Headteacher : Patricia Wilkie
Inspector's name and number: Robert Miller 357

School context

The school is smaller than the average sized primary school. Around two thirds of pupils live within the catchment area. Most are of White British heritage but 6 % of the 208 pupils on roll are from a variety of minority ethnic groups. Adaptations to the school building have taken place since the last inspection to make the entrance foyer more welcoming and to provide accommodation for pastoral support, intervention work and music lessons.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Layer de la Haye as a Church of England school are good

Layer de la Haye school has a well established Christian character which is fostered by all members of the school community. It is reflected in the mission statement and deeply embedded in the vision of this school as a family. Every pupil is highly valued and treated as a child of God. All their gifts are nurtured and the supportive atmosphere helps children and staffs reach their full potential.

Established strengths

- The way in which the Christian character contributes to pupils' academic achievement.
- The spiritual development of learners, enhanced by the outstanding school environment.
- Pupils' attitudes towards prayer and the inspiration they derive from it.

Focus for development

- Introduce an objective around the distinctiveness of the church school character into the school improvement plan.
- Develop governor's formally monitoring and evaluation of worship.
- Engage parents in seeking their views on the distinctive Christian character of the school.

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

Layer de la Haye is a happy, caring and inclusive school where the staff act as exemplary role models. The relationships with the children are based on Christian principles of mutual

trust, love, honesty and understanding, which are mirrored in the school's mission statement based around the gospel values. These values are particularly evident in the support given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities who are cared for in an excellent manner. Children say they are respected, valued and listened to by staff. Pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and there have been no exclusions. Early identification, intervention and support, ensures they fulfil their potential and contributes to their well-being. Academic achievement and attendance are high and the vast majority of pupils make good progress. No pupil under achieves. Attainment is above national expectations at both key stages and particularly high in reading by the end of key stage 2 where pupils are in the top 20% of primary schools nationally. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development arises from the whole ethos of the school and from the commitment shown by each member of staff. A particularly strong example of the high quality teaching in this area was seen in a Year 5 lesson, where pupils debated the meaning of spirituality. A definition was discussed around cherishing what is good, joyful and truthful and in relationships what is generous, creative and loving. Pupils develop an extremely good sense of right and wrong and their responsibilities in society. Staff act as exemplary role models and the older pupils model this moral code to their younger peers. They are gaining an increasing insight into other faiths and cultures through the good teaching of religious education [RE], which is beginning to challenge the older pupils, who say they are motivated to learn about other faiths as well as Christianity. RE makes a valuable contribution to SMSC. These features, together with an inside school environment that contains excellent wall displays particularly of the school's close links with a school in Kenya, Christian symbolism in most classrooms and a quiet outside area, present opportunities for pupils and staff alike to reflect on their lives. The displays also enable them to learn about the cultural diversity in the world and what it means to be a pupil in a church school. Parents speak highly of their children's Christian upbringing as a result of attending Layer de la Haye school. One parent said, "My child regularly comes home singing the hymn of the day".

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and is very inclusive. It is well planned, with themes linked to the Christian calendar, gospel values or to the curriculum. Collective worship and the curriculum are strongly linked so there is much evidence of the spiritual development of the learners being deepened through work in the classroom as well as in collective worship. The curriculum is enhanced by offering opportunities for reflection and prayer, a number of which are written by the pupils themselves. These prayers are displayed on a prayer tree and one child said, "It helps me to see what other children think about and whether it's the same as me." Pupils and staff are very positive about the links between collective worship and the curriculum; children say it helps them to understand the work in the classroom and gives them ideas for discussions. Leaders of worship, during this interregnum include staff, older pupils, a non-stipendiary curate and members of the parochial church council [PCC]. Messy Church gives a good number of pupils the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith and learn more about the Bible. The learners enjoy the diversity of worship and respond well. They are eager to answer questions, sing or take part in drama or storytelling. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Staff participate regularly in collective worship, supporting the learners, reading and praying with them and these gatherings enable pupils and staff alike to carry the Christian message with them throughout the school and into the wider world. The PCC governor and visiting curate are well known and frequent visitors to school, where they enable pupils to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ and Anglican traditions and practice. A small cross, lighted candle and open Bible act as a focal point and transforms the hall into a special place for worship. Although pupils have opportunities to comment on worship it is not currently regularly and formally monitored and evaluated by governors in an effort to raise the quality still further.

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

The head teacher, strongly supported by the staff, foundation and chair of governors provide good leadership. This is based on clear Christian principles, valuing each and every member of the school family as a unique and special individual. This strong distinctive Christian vision

is fully supported by all staff and parents and is explicit in all aspects of school life, creating many opportunities for the pupils to observe excellent role models living the Christian life in practice. This results in good standards of academic achievement and progress and the high priority given to the well-being of all pupils. The arrangements for religious education [RE] and acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements. The high priority given to RE is evident in the strong partnership between the head teacher and the RE co-ordinator. They work closely together to provide support to ensure RE lessons present pupils with challenge. The school's leadership team and governors have worked well since the last inspection to ensure that the self-evaluation remains thorough and identifies the main areas for monitoring Layer de la Haye school. One priority is the teaching of spiritual education across the curriculum and the monitoring provided ensures that older pupils particularly are grasping and are able to interpret the concept. The school improvement plan currently lacks a focus on the monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school, in order to develop a clear understanding of the future needs as a church school. There are now closer links with the parish church generally, with the introduction of Messy Church in particular This is organised by church members and well attended in the school by both parents and pupils alike. This has helped to strengthen the engagement and involvement of parents. This represents significant improvement since the last inspection. There are good links with the PCC, the diocese and neighbouring schools. This also represents good improvement since the previous inspection. However, parents are not sufficiently involved in the school's evaluation of its distinctive Christian character. Teamwork and distributive leadership has a high priority in the school. This creates opportunities to develop leadership potential and results in ownership of initiatives, enthusiasm, innovation and collaboration. The capacity to sustain further improvement is good.

SIAMS report June 2013 Layer de la Haye Primary school, Colchester, Essex CO2 0DS