



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **St Andrews Church of England (VA) Primary School**

School Green Lane  
North Weald  
Epping  
Essex  
CM16 6EH

#### **Diocese: Chelmsford**

Local authority: Essex  
Dates of inspection: 02.07.13  
Date of last inspection: 03.07.07  
School's unique reference number: 413118  
Headteacher: Gill Young  
Inspector's name and number: Lyn Hillier 702

#### **School context**

The school is below average in size and most pupils are from white British backgrounds although there are a few children from ethnic minority families. The school serves its local community. The number of children eligible for funding through the pupil premium is low and the proportion of children with special educational needs and disabled pupils is also below average. The church is not easily accessible from the school. The parish is in an interregnum and the school misses the strong support that was given to them by the last incumbent. The school has had a turbulent year in terms of staffing.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrews as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

St Andrews is a school which supports its pupils very well. Relationships between the adults and pupils are good and the children are happy and feel safe in their care. The school provides a good standard of education overall as their recent Ofsted has highlighted. The collective worship and the teaching of religious education reinforce the school's Christian ethos. The leadership of the school is confident that the values of the school have a positive impact on the day-to-day life of the school as a Christian community.

#### **Established strengths**

- The children feel safe and know the staff are there to support and help them
- The whole community believes that they are part of a community which is underpinned by its Christian values
- Pupils' knowledge of Bible stories

### **Focus for development**

- Raising standards in Religious Education and ensuring that there is full coverage of the RE curriculum
- Appointing a subject leader for RE and ensuring there is a rigorous system for monitoring, assessment and evaluating RE in order to secure improvements in teaching and learning
- Increase the governing body's awareness of its responsibility to the school as a church school and ensure its active involvement in monitoring the Christian foundation of the school.

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

St Andrew's is a happy school where the children feel valued and special; they achieve well against national standards in Maths and English. Attendance is improving and the school supports families when problems are identified. Pupils are able to articulate how the staff support them and they believe themselves to be treated fairly. They are confident that their views will be taken seriously and that their teachers will give them the opportunity to voice them. They speak of their teachers as being 'very generous'. Although they find it difficult to articulate the school values explicitly, they are able to say exactly how the teachings of Jesus relate to how they behave and treat one another and how this helps them to work and play together. Opportunities to develop children's spirituality are explicitly fostered during acts of worship but need to be more consciously promoted in the broader curriculum. The school invites visitors from other faiths into the school to develop pupils' respect and understanding of the diversity and difference within other faiths communities. Children are clear of the expectations placed upon them by the staff and by each other. Pupils are confident that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with immediately but wanted to make it clear that it was very rare for children to feel threatened in any way. RE is effective in the way that it underpins the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and increases their sense of being part of a Christian community.

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

Worship is an important part of the school day and always involves the whole school. It underpins the values taught to the children who enjoy assemblies and speak enthusiastically about how 'they make you think'. There is an established pattern of worship and the themes are planned around the church's year. Staff are committed to the ethos of the school and regularly lead worship. A focus of development from the previous inspection had been to develop the pupil involvement in planning and leading worship. This is now in place and on the day of the inspection a group of Yr 5 children confidently led an act of worship, encouraging the children to thank God for the talents he has given them. The worship was in the Anglican tradition using all four elements of gathering, engaging, responding and sending. After welcoming the school community, the story and their well thought out questions made even the youngest pupils reflect on how they could develop and use their talents. The prayer had been written by one of the pupils leading the worship who said, 'You have to write it yourself because it is very difficult to find a prayer which says exactly what you want to say'. The worship increases the children's knowledge of the Bible and the worship leaders ensure that the children can understand the relevance that the stories have on their own lives. Parents speak of 'Really knowing the school is a church school when it comes to celebrating the main church festivals'. The distance between the school and the church means that it is not possible for the school community to use the church as often as it would like to but it tries hard to use it as often as is practicable. The school celebrates the Eucharist and pupils understand why this is important to Christians; the older children were able to talk about the Trinitarian nature of God.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is inadequate**

Although the RE in the school develops pupils' understanding of the Bible and they have a good knowledge of Bible stories, the inconsistencies in the teaching and learning across the school mean that pupils are not making the expected levels of progress by the end of Key Stage 2. The school has been without a subject leader this year and the role has been shared by the Headteacher and Deputy who have many other areas of responsibility. This has meant that assessment and monitoring has not been rigorous and standards have not been maintained. During the inspection a good lesson based on the Creation story was seen in the Reception Class where the children were learning about how God created the world and the need to look after it. The teacher engaged the children immediately and they made good progress. However, a work scrutiny carried out as part of the inspection in conjunction with the headteacher showed that for the majority of learners the standards of attainment and rates of progress are consistently below national expectations. There is a general lack of challenge in the tasks set by teachers and children are often asked to spend much of the lesson writing in books re-telling stories. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their ability to develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths or investigate the impact of faith on the lives of the believers. There is very little next step marking; usually work is marked with a tick and a comment or sticker. Marking sometimes includes the teacher asking questions but there was little evidence that pupils are given time to respond or finish the work if they have been asked to do so. There is also an inconsistency in how learning objectives are presented to the children and no evidence of work being differentiated for the differing ability groups. Little assessment has taken place which means that it is difficult for teachers to identify areas for development or gaps in the children's learning.

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

The Headteacher ensures that the life of the school is underpinned by worship which is explicitly Christian and because of this the pupils are very aware of how the stories from the Bible can help them with their lives. This year has been a difficult year for the school in terms of staff turbulence and the consequence of this has been the slip in standards of leadership of RE which has had an impact on progress made by pupils. The parish is in an interregnum but there has been continued support from the church and the Chairman, who is an ordained minister, has helped the school during this time. Parents say that their children are being taught good values for life and they feel welcome when they attend assemblies and services in the church. The governors are aware that they need to have clearer monitoring and evaluation systems in place so that they can have a more strategic view of the school as a church school. They also need to have a greater appreciation of their responsibility to ensure the Christian foundation of the school is safeguarded into the future. The school is addressing areas from the last inspection. The senior leadership team in the school has worked hard to ensure that standards in Maths and English have improved and it is now important that this same rigour is applied to church school issues.

SIAMS report July 2013 St. Andrews CE VA Primary School, North Weald CM16 6EH