

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St. Giles Primary School

Church Street  
Great Maplestead  
Halstead  
CO9 2RG

#### Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex  
Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> January  
Date of last inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2009  
School's unique reference number: 115068  
Headteacher: Mrs Jinnie Nichols  
Inspector's name and number: Dr Duncan Ramsey 697

#### School context

St. Giles is a smaller than average school serving the village and surrounding area. A large majority of pupils are of White British Heritage. The proportion of children with special needs is high. Few children are eligible for school meals.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Giles as a Church of England school are good.**

St. Giles is a good school because insightful leadership with effective support from staff and governors has helped create a Christian learning environment where children have the opportunity to develop in all areas of their life.

#### Established strengths

- The warmth of relationships between all members of the school community.
- The active participation of children in worship and the opportunities provided for them to take leadership roles.
- The quality of the school environment , in particular the way it has been designed to provide children with opportunities for quiet and reflection, alongside more active play.
- The leadership of the school at all levels.

#### Focus for development

- Increase the range and regularity of visitors who support the school worship programme.
- Further develop the partnership between St. Giles Church and the school.

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

The school has developed an ethos based around Christian values. These are understood by the children and used to help provide guidance on the way they should treat one another and adults. This means that children have a good understanding of how to use values such as respect and forgiveness in their daily lives and this results in good behaviour around school and at playtime. A rich and diverse curriculum has been developed so that children enjoy their lessons and are interested in their learning. They say that teachers make lessons fun and they often go outdoors to learn. St. Giles is an inclusive school and children treat each other with respect. A wide range of signs and symbols around the school help make the school distinctively Christian. Children value and respect these symbols and have a good understanding of the Anglican traditions. There are particularly good interactive displays around school which effectively support pupils' spiritual development. One of these is called the River of Peace and gives children the opportunity to drop a stone in water and say a prayer at the same time. There are places of quiet inside and outside the school and these are used regularly by children who want a time of calm. One parent describes how the school

helped her child settle in after transferring from another school and how her confidence had improved. Another parent described how very good communication between the school and home was helping her child make progress. Children are gaining a good understanding of the role they play in local, national and global communities. They show an active concern for those less well off than themselves and are passionate and successful fundraisers. Children have worked hard to design aspects of the outdoor environment and raise money to support its construction. Links with the local community are good. There are joint services between the Church and school and the headteacher is working hard to build bridges with local community members and groups. The partnership with St. Giles church is hampered by the lack of an incumbent but there are opportunities to strengthen this link in the short term. Children are given good opportunities to develop an understanding and appreciation of other religions through planned curriculum activities. The well planned curriculum helps religious education( R.E ) play an important role in the children's development of social, spiritual, moral and cultural development.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.**

The worship at St. Giles school is outstanding in the way it inspires the school community and plays a positive role on the day to day life of children. Worship is planned very effectively to interest and engage children. Children regularly evaluate acts of worship and they perceptively make comments about the strengths of different assemblies and the way they can be improved. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has a clear vision for how to provide the very best possible experiences for children. Children show very high levels of engagement in acts of worship. This is because every care is taken to involve them as participants. Children talk enthusiastically about a wide range of assemblies and the way in which they apply their experience from acts of worship to everyday life, is a particular strength of the school. One particularly good example that the children talked about was the "Squirty Cream" assembly. Children very clearly explained that if you say unkind words it's often difficult to make things better, just as squirting cream is not easy to clean up. Leaders respond to the children's comments ensuring that their views are taken into account when planning new themes for the following term. This results in worship that is truly inspirational. The worship programme within school and through termly visits to St. Giles Church ensures that children have a good understanding of the Anglican tradition and they are confident in using a range of traditional prayers and responses.

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

Leadership of St. Giles' school is effective at all levels and there is a good partnership between the head teacher and assistant head teacher which has helped introduce a variety of changes that have been valued by the school community. The creation of a new vision and school values has impacted very positively on the life of the school. This vision sets out clear expectations for the school as a church school and identifies the next areas for ongoing improvement. Governors, staff and parents were all included in its development. The headteacher shows considerable skill and enthusiasm in her approach to moving the school on, and in her four terms has already helped the school make many steps forward. A good link has been developed with a local farmer who kindly allows the children to take part in a range of outdoor activities in the woods. In addition links have been made with local community groups such as the knitting group which provided angels for use at nativity time. The warmth of relationships around school is such that children say that they feel valued and special. They say that the headteacher is fun, kind and always having good ideas. They say that the "Stay and Play" club was a "brilliant idea". Many recent initiatives have helped develop the role St. Giles plays in the local community. Governors have a good understanding of the way in which St. Giles is developing as a distinctively Church school and there is good staff development in place. The role of the assistant head teacher has been developed recently and she is having a very positive impact on a range of school issues. The school has made good progress since the last inspection by improving the school environment so that pupils' spiritual development is enhanced and by improving the quality of worship to such a high level.

