

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>White Notley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School</b>	
Vicarage Avenue, White Notley, Witham, Essex, CM8 1RZ	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Chelmsford</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of inspection	7 December 2017
Date of last inspection	December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary – Voluntary Controlled - 115111
Headteacher	Ruth Baugh
Inspector's name and number	Niki Paterson 883

### School context

This small school serves the local village of White Notley and surrounding rural area. It has 109 pupils on roll. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils with some sort of special educational need or disability (SEND) is above the national average. Disadvantaged pupil numbers are below the national average. There have been changes in headship since the previous denominational inspection and historically a high changeover of staff. Staffing is now more stable. In May 2017 Ofsted judged the school to be good under the current leadership.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of White Notley as a Church of England school are good

- Leaders have a shared, highly inclusive Christian vision for the school which impacts strongly on attendance, behaviour and the attainment and progress of all its pupils.
- Excellent relationships with local churches supports well the school's mission of service to its community.
- Leaders have created a caring and nurturing environment in which both staff and pupils are able to realise their varying gifts and potential.

### Areas to improve

- Develop more explicit communication of the Christian distinctiveness of the school values so that it is understood by a wide range of stakeholders.
- Further develop pupils' leadership of collective worship so that Anglican traditions are understood by pupils and embedded in regular practice.
- Formalise the planning of worship so that it supports religious, spiritual and moral development more effectively
- Expand professional development and training for governors so that through their focused monitoring, the school's Christian distinctiveness consistently drives forward developments and improvements

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

The school community draws on the Christian values of compassion, respect, aspiration, honesty and responsibility. These permeate both the curriculum and the physical environment. They are firmly embedded in the working life of the school and drive the headteacher's vision 'to serve every pupil'. This is particularly exemplified by how well the whole community embraces the diverse needs of their pupils with love and compassion. One parent described how well the school teaches children to 'love thy neighbour'. Pupils are intuitively caring towards one another and the inclusive ethos has been particularly effective in supporting families whose children have additional needs.

Pupils and school leaders can articulate how the school's Christian values, embedded through daily practice, are supporting excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. For example, the school value of 'responsibility' has led to pupils writing and owning the behavior policy which in turn has encouraged high levels of self-discipline. As a result attainment has maintained a three year upward trend and vulnerable groups progress well. Attendance is in line with national expectation and there are no exclusions. Most pupils make reference to the biblical basis for the school's Christian values.

Pupils value the presence of the reflective spaces in their classrooms which can be freely accessed. When combined with opportunities for musical tuition, and insightfully taught religious education (RE), it is clear how spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development reflects and in turn is well supported by the school's Christian and inclusive ethos. Pupils have an understanding of their responsibility to love others in their community and beyond by organising their own fundraising to support local and national projects. This, in turn, helps pupils' understanding of the links between Christian values and SMSC learning.

RE has a high profile and is well taught through challenge and intuitive open questioning. Thus it supports pupils' spiritual and moral development well. Pupils have some awareness of Christianity as a worldwide faith, particularly through their celebrated links with Kagio school in Kenya as part of the Chelmsford diocesan school's link. Pupils rightly recognise that RE, through for example, helping them to learn about and learn from a range of faiths, encourages them to appreciate difference and diversity.

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

Distinctively Christian collective worship, which is focused on the teaching and inspiration of Jesus, is clearly valued by the community. Pupils are attentive, behave well and are joyful in their praise. Worship is well led by a wide range of leaders, including staff, clergy and members of the parish church and another local church called 'Cornerstone Church'. This ensures that pupils experience a variety in styles in worship and helps to maintain freshness and interest.

Worship is mainly led by the headteacher and worship leader, with staff attending regularly. Pupils are beginning to be developed as leaders of worship as recommended from the previous denominational inspection. However, opportunities remain limited, and consequently this is not embedded practice.

Christian values are integral to the content of worship, which is informed by termly planning, rooted in biblical teaching. Through the role model of Jesus Christ pupils have an understanding of their responsibility to love others in their community and beyond by organising their own fundraising to support local and national projects. This, in turn, supports pupils' understanding of the links between Christian values and SMSC learning. Daily planning is informal and not fully recorded. This means that the involvement in planning and evaluation of other stakeholders, such as governors, is limited.

Through worship pupils have some understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and a few are able to speak about this. Pupils are familiar with some Anglican traditions principally through the celebration and observance of festivals linked to the Christian calendar. However, other key Anglican practices such as, for example, opening and closing sentences with responses and other liturgical forms of worship is not familiar. Prayer is made meaningful, as both pupils and staff write and deliver prayer which is relevant to the current needs of the community. Pupils are very familiar with the Lord's prayer and understand its importance for Christians. Worship in school is appropriately extended by worship in the parish church for various festivals. Parents welcome the opportunity to engage in worship with their children during these visits which supports the school's links with its parish church and families well.

Monitoring of worship is carried out by staff and pupils, and is effective in improving practice. There is limited evidence of governor monitoring but this is not regular or rigorous enough. Leaders have ensured that the hall has been developed as a worshipful space with a display of the Christian year and others which highlight the school's religious character. This further enhances the centrality of worship to the working life of this community. Clergy describe how the pupil engagement with worship has led to staff and families attending the All Age services at the church on a more frequent basis.

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

Distinctive and focussed leadership of the headteacher is developing a whole school approach to selflessly enable every child to flourish. This is rooted in a shared Christian ethos of service to others. The staff embody the vision that every child is an individual who deserves to be confident, articulate, caring and happy. This has supported a continuous upward trend in academic standards and has closed the gaps in progress for vulnerable groups of pupils. A strong relationship with the parish church is clearly evidenced through the integral role of the parish priest. He is a regular visitor, and well known to the pupils and their families. Good communication with parents about the school's vision means that they are highly supportive of the school's distinctiveness and its Christian foundation. Parents fully appreciate the welcoming and hospitable ethos which is akin to a 'large family'. Staff often work with parents at home to meet the needs of individual pupils. This exemplifies how the school embodies its value of compassion to all families.

School leaders have been proactive in highlighting the values on a practical level to support school improvement. Along with a supportive governing body, they have ensured that Christian distinctiveness is at the core of school life. Caring relationships exist between staff members who feel valued and nurtured by school leaders to achieve their potential. This has led to good staff retention and a collegiate approach to going 'above and beyond'. Consequently, this supports staff well for working within a church school context.

The headteacher and RE leader are supported by professional development at diocesan level. This has resulted in a shared understanding of spirituality and has ensured that standards in RE are prioritised. Areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have been mostly addressed. A cycle of reflective and insightful self-evaluation incorporates a range of stakeholder views, including views of pupils and parents. This is well matched to school improvement priorities. Monitoring by governors is in place but this is not consistent and therefore does not impact fully on the effectiveness of the school as a church school. Statutory requirements for the provision of RE and collective worship are met. RE is well managed and leaders are embedding good practice in collective worship. RE is taught discretely in line with time recommendations and appropriate links made with other subject areas as necessary.

SIAMS report (December 2017) White Notley CE (VC) Primary School, Witham, Essex, CM8 1RZ