

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road, Sible Hedingham, Halstead, Essex. CO9 3NR

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Diocese

Chelmsford

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Essex

Date of inspection

10th February 2017

Date of last inspection

January 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Primary Voluntary Controlled 115070

Headteacher

Miss Julie Harper

Inspector's name and number

John Baker 11

School context

St. Peter's is a smaller than average primary school with 211 pupils. The school serves the villages of Sible Hedingham and the surrounding area. Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is broadly average. The school is linked to Mama Stella's School in Lusaka, Zambia. The parish church of St. Peter's is situated a short distance away.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Peter's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian character and values are central to its ethos and have a strong and positive influence on pupils' achievement, personal development and well-being.
- Religious education (RE) and collective worship contribute well to the school's work as an Anglican church school and to enhancing and deepening its Christian distinctiveness.
- The school has close and supportive links with St. Peter's parish church, which is highly valued by pupils, staff, parents and carers, and these strengthen its outreach into the wider community.

Areas to improve

- Strengthen the strategic role of governance through developing governors' skills and knowledge in effectively monitoring and driving forward the school as an Anglican church school.
- Review the school's collective worship programme in order to broaden the range of Anglican practice so that it offers pupils the opportunity to deepen their own spiritual journey.

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

In September 2015, the school's Christian values based on the acronym TERRIFIC were introduced. These values focus on pupils being trustworthy, enthusiastic, responsible, respectful, independent, fair, inclusive and caring. They are now deeply embedded in school practice and permeate the core work of this Anglican church school. Pupils and staff can clearly express these values, as appropriate, and their Christian impact on school life. They strongly influence the progress and attainment of all pupils, and underpin the school's distinctive Christian character through, for example, the way the values are linked with biblical teaching in RE and collective worship. The emphasis on living out the school's values in everyday life has been influential in improving the attainment of pupils which is at the national average and improving. The school also has a mission statement which is inclusive, with a clear focus on 'nurturing the spirit of the child'. As a direct consequence, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is very well promoted and relationships are strong. Pupils, moreover, are safe, well behaved and show respect to staff and each other. Pupils' attendance is improving and is now above the national average. This has been achieved through a number of strategies such as the introduction of a weekly attendance cup. The school's values are well displayed in every classroom and in the main hall. Through collective worship in particular the values are linked to stories of Jesus and other Bible stories.

These strongly reinforce the central role of the school's values in influencing pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils' understanding of the wider Anglican church is well supported by its links to a school in Zambia and by work which focuses on the plight of refugees around the world. They write prayers on the backs of flags from the countries they come from. These prayers are placed on prayer trees in every teaching area and in the prayer box in front entrance. Quiet areas are set aside in every classroom containing Christian books and artefacts. The use of the prayer trees and the class quiet areas, together with the school's daily acts of collective worship, support well pupils' SMSC development. The current RE curriculum was introduced at the beginning of the academic year and is beginning to impact positively on pupils' attainment and progress. The curriculum reinforces the place of Christianity in particular but also appropriately covers other world religions such as Judaism and Islam. This helps pupils to begin to understand the place of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Pupils enjoy RE and take part in activities that are appropriate for their age and ability group and which contribute to them developing their critical thinking skills. For example, in the Early Years through sequencing the biblical story of the Good Samaritan they actively learn about being caring to someone who needs help. Older pupils address key questions in RE such as 'Is anything ever eternal?' Such questioning successfully helps pupils to explore in greater depth the nature of God and reflect on their own beliefs. RE makes a positive contribution to the school's Christian ethos and values through its high profile in the school's curriculum.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship suitably reinforces the school's core Christian values and broadly reflects the Anglican church year. Acts of worship follow a regular pattern. Typically a candle is lit, a hymn is sung and pupils listen to a Bible story or a reading linked to the planned theme. This enables pupils to begin to understand something of the structure of worship from an Anglican perspective. They respond positively and respectfully during worship and participate well in songs, hymns and prayers. This adds to their enjoyment and helps them to see the relevance of the worship programme for themselves and their school. Pupils are correctly beginning to recognise the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The importance of Jesus for Christians is aptly focused on across the worship programme. At times, the school choir leads the singing and this powerfully reinforces a sense of worship for the whole school community. The Lord's Prayer is frequently used during acts of worship and pupils write their own prayers. These prayers support pupils' personal spiritual journey well. Acts of worship, which are explicitly Christian, take place daily and involve all pupils, including the youngest. One day each week classes hold their own acts of worship using a worship box and other artefacts. These times are special for pupils and staff and contribute towards ensuring that worship is effectively placed at

the heart of school life. The school's Christian values are strongly reinforced at these times. This helps pupils to relate the school's values with, in particular, the life and work of Jesus. The worship programme in school is appropriately extended through special services at Harvest, Advent and Christmas and Ash Wednesday in the parish church. These involve pupils, staff and governors and parents and other members of the community are invited. These occasions are well attended and fittingly extend the work of the school into the wider community. They also help to strengthen the school's Anglican links. The headteacher, music co-ordinator, a member of the local Baptist church and the incumbent lead worship at school. This offers pupils a variety of worship styles and helps broaden their spiritual life. A pupil worship team was recently formed under the leadership of the incumbent. Its impact on improving worship has yet to be felt. A policy on collective worship is in place, and improvements in collective worship are identified in the school development plan (SDP). This ensures that the provision for collective worship is being regularly reviewed.

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

In the period since the previous denominational inspection the headteacher has worked closely with governors and others to develop the school's Christian ethos and strategic direction. This enabled the school's leadership team (SLT) to determine its mission statement which is founded on Christian principles. Such principles focus on creating a safe, caring and inclusive environment which 'supports and inspires learning and enables all pupils to reach their potential both socially and academically'. Standards of achievement of all pupils are improving and this relates directly to the school's Christian character and values. The curriculum is informed by a distinctive Christian vision which supports the well-being of all pupils, including their SMSC development. The school has close links with St. Peter's parish church through the direct involvement of the incumbent and foundation governor. Links with and the involvement of parents in school life is good. Parents are supportive of the school's Christian ethos and the impact it has on their children's lives and education.

Systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school and its Christian distinctiveness by senior leaders and governors takes place but informally. It is not regular enough to impact reliably on outcomes. However, the school has a detailed development plan in place with a section entitled 'Church School'. As a consequence, members of the governing board are kept fully informed about the work of the school as an Anglican church school. The school has a programme of continuing professional development in place which contributes well to staff understanding the significance of working in a church school. The diocesan advisors provide this training. This is an example of the way in which the school draws on the good support provided by the Diocese. Governor training, moreover, is a permanent item on governing board meetings. Governors, working with senior leadership, ensure that worship and RE is given a high priority and both aspects have funding allocated to them. Leadership of both areas is good and arrangements meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report (February 2017) St. Peter's CE (VC) Primary School, Sible Hedingham, Essex. CO9 3NR