

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

<b>St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School</b>	
Church Road, Great Yeldham, Halstead, CO9 4PT	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese / Methodist District</b>	<b>Chelmsford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Essex
Date of inspection	27 February 2018
Date of last inspection	March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled: 115069
Headteacher	Carrie Prior
Inspector's name and number	Andrew Binnell: 665

### School context

This smaller than average sized primary school organises pupils into five mixed age classes taught by six teachers. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is above average. The proportion of pupils for which the school receives extra funding due to social or economic disadvantage is below the national average. The parish of Great Yeldham is currently without an incumbent.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew CE (VC) primary school as a Church of England school are good

- The whole school community regardless of background lives out the school's explicit and inclusive Christian values. This leads to strong relationships and supports pupils' very good attitudes, manners and behaviours.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher who, working with the team in school and governors, has significantly strengthened the Christian foundation of this church school.
- Collective worship is inspirational and inclusive, impacting positively on individuals and on school life.

### Areas to improve

- Increase the frequency and depth of more formalised Anglican worship practices held both in the school and in the parish church in order to add greater appreciations of these practices than is currently available to pupils and adults in the school.
- Extend the use of the parish church as a resource to support the wider curriculum and advance the good links that already exist.
- Extend pupils' understanding of the value of personal prayer as part of their own spiritual journey.

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

The strong ethos of St Andrew's permeates all aspects of school life. Its core Christian values are clear and explicit and well linked to biblical teaching. They are identified as confidence, compassion, community, creativity, enthusiasm and determination. These are successfully lived out by pupils and adults across the school and strongly support its overriding aim for pupils of, 'to be the best we can be'. The values contribute in a highly effectively way to the school being a calm and happy place. They also support pupils in the creation of strong relationships and is demonstrated in their very good attitudes, manners and behaviours. Pupils and their parents rightly recognise and articulate how these Christian values impact on daily life, inside and outside of school. There are many high quality displays, updated regularly, which reflect the school's Christian character, and often follow the Christian year. In the school entrance hall there is a display of values and there are corridor displays highlighting, for example, 'spirituality at St Andrew's'. In keeping with its Christian vision, the school's curriculum is broad and creative, and there is a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities for all. These are popular with pupils and uptake is good, providing pupils opportunities to work together both in and out of the classroom. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good overall. Pupils' spiritual development is deepening and contributes positively to their attitudes and enjoyment of learning. Pupils' outcomes in 2017 indicate that they are above national averages across the school and were in line with school expectations, indicating that their assessment and monitoring procedures are accurate. From their various starting points, the vast majority make at least good progress. The leadership of the school has correctly focussed on raising ambitions for all learners. This is because they rightly recognise that the high attainment and progress of pupils is a key expression of the school's Christian mission as a church school. The living out of the school's Christian values in its daily life results in pupils feeling safe and learning effectively. This means that pupils' wellbeing is taken seriously. As a result of this, pupils want to be at school, with evident improvements in pupils' attendance over time. It is currently above the national average. Any instances of less than good behaviour are quickly resolved, drawing explicitly on the school's values. One pupil commented 'everyone wants everyone to be happy at this school.' Pupils are polite and extremely courteous. They are very proud of their school and its Christian foundation. Children are fully involved in school life, for example, as sports leaders, play leaders, as democratically elected members the school council, or as members of the pupil worship council. The school encourages pupils to think of others and they organise fundraising events for a wide range of charities. Recent support was provided for Children in Need, Christian Aid and for Red Nose Day. When asked why we support charities one pupil commented 'because we are Christians and Christians support everyone.' RE contributes well to the school's Christian foundation and provides a range of opportunities to learn about Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. This contributes positively to a developing and age-appropriate understanding of difference and diversity.

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

Collective worship at St Andrew's is vibrant and inclusive. Worship which explores the biblical basis of the school's values makes an outstanding contribution to the way in which the school's Christian values are applied in everyday life. There is a clear structure to worship, including liturgical responses and rituals, which ground it in Anglican practice. All pupils, irrespective of faith or non-faith background, participate in the worship programme, which supports the community feel of the school effectively. Through worship, pupils develop an excellent understanding of principal Christian festivals. Pupils have a developing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through worship and enhanced through appropriate links with their RE lessons. One pupil, as an example, at the school requested further support with his understanding of this difficult concept of the Trinity symbol and suggested a display in the hall. This is now up and in place. Pupils write and offer their own prayers with empathy for and understanding of the themes for worship. Saying the Lord's Prayer, singing Christian hymns, songs, and the use of candles are established practice. Pupils have a firm understanding of the words and content of the Lord's Prayer and appreciate something of its significance to Christians. The school recognises in its own self-evaluation the need to extend pupils' understanding of the value of personal prayer both in and out of school as part of their own spiritual journey. Pupils enjoy each act of worship but particularly enjoy their celebration assembly each week. During this time pupil's achievements are celebrated, including when they have demonstrated one of the school values during the week. The worship schedule is planned annually covering the three terms and effectively explores school values. Collective worship is enhanced by pupils' having the opportunity to visit the parish church of St Andrew's at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. They also to mark, in church, Remembrance Day and for leavers of the school at the end of the academic year. However, the parish church is under-utilised as a resource for the wider curriculum. This is recognised by the school and leaders have firm plans in place to improve this from the summer term 2018. Further strengthening of pupils' participation in

school worship has been an ongoing focus for the school's leadership team. This has led to significantly improved pupil participation since the previous denominational inspection. Pupils' now have opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate worship at St Andrew's. The pupil worship council members now lead two acts of worship each half term either alongside the headteacher or as a group. Pupils regularly monitor and evaluate acts of worship and directly feed back to the headteacher and the wider worship council. These are examples of a range of innovations developed by the school since the previous denominational inspection. These also includes using collaborative groupings of pupils in some acts of worship to generate their own prayers and then sharing them. The school now has a worship board displayed at the front of the school hall, which provides an overview of the week's worship. This includes hymns, music and the names of any visitors leading worship that week. This is another clear indication of the importance of worship across school life and of its strengthened base which ground it in Anglican practice. However the school rightly recognises the need to increase the frequency and depth of more formalised Anglican worship opportunities.

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

The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and five other members of the staff team who are at varying stages of their teaching careers. The school, with the headteacher taking the lead, has responded well to the identified area for development from the previous denominational inspection. This has led to an effective monitoring schedule which means that the impact of new initiatives are well evaluated and impact on refining practice well. An example of this is the improvements made to the school entrance hall, in the light of a monitoring visit completed by a member of a local ministry team linked to the school. As a result of this monitoring visit the school values, cross and a Bible can now be seen on entry to the school. School leaders have worked effectively with the wider staff team and with governors, and have successfully built on the school's Christian mission. The school has well thought out plans for the future encapsulated in its school development plan (2017-2020). This high quality document has detailed plans to strengthen further its Christian foundation. It shows that the school knows itself well and that through its good self-evaluation it is able to ensure that its Christian distinctiveness drives forward further developments. Partnership with the Diocese is very strong, with regular visits from its diocesan link adviser. She has led a range of training activities for the staff team and governors, advice for which has been well acted upon and incorporated into school practice. A good example is the evolution of the school's approach to collaborative grouping of pupils in school based collective worship. This approach has been well received by pupils and members of the staff team alike. All members of staff feel valued and respected. In turn, they inspire high expectations in pupils which impacts positively on academic attainment and progress. Governors are a stable team with a very good range of expertise. They are well led by a chair of governors who knows the school particularly well. Governors are very involved in school life and their role in supporting the school's self-evaluation as a church school is focused and rigorous. Though the parish has been without an incumbent from the start of the spring term 2018, the headteacher has utilised contacts in order to ensure that ministers have led worship on a regular basis in school. Local clergy from the Hedingham and Upper Colne Benifice team have provided this support to the school. Parents see the school as a caring and inclusive community that puts their children at the heart of its work, based on its Christian values. They correctly recognise that they are well informed of their children's attainment and progress. Communication is effective and the headteacher has a strong visible presence and operates an effective 'open door' policy. Parents rightly are appropriately involved in school life, for example, through opportunities to attend worship and through various fund raising activities organised by the school. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met and the leadership of RE and worship is secure. The school provides effective professional, spiritual and personal development for staff and governors within the context of working in a church school.

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