

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Churchfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School & Nursery, Cheshunt Wash, Waltham Cross EN8 0LU

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority: Hertfordshire
Dates of inspection: 25th May, 2012
Date of last inspection: N/A
School's unique reference number: 136024
Headteacher: Miss Samantha Sweetman
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Lindsay Fraser 107

School context

This is a larger than average primary school. In 2010 the school was amalgamated from a local authority community school and a voluntary aided Church of England junior school. The headteacher of the junior school was appointed as the headteacher of the newly amalgamated school. Most pupils are from a white British background. An above average number of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Churchfield Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

This is a good church with the capacity to become an outstanding church school because of the vision, drive and energy of the headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body. The school is proud of its distinctive Christian character which is now beginning to have an impact upon the all-round development of pupils.

Established strengths

- The drive and vision of the headteacher and governing body to establish this newly amalgamated primary school as a distinctively Christian church school.
- The very effective partnership with the local church, the incumbent and the support its volunteers give to the school.
- The provision for and quality of reflection, through the use of themes and dedicated time.
- The quality of interactive display which underpins the importance of the Christian ethos within this school.

Focus for development

- To embed the Christian ethos and its impact upon pupils by the development of 'Values Education' as identified in the school development plan.
- To raise standards in religious education through the continued emphasis on the development of communication skills and a clarification of how to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding more effectively.
- To increase the impact of Collective Worship further by involving pupils in planning and leading acts of worship.

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

The distinctive Christian character of Churchfield Primary School is good because there are clear signs of the early impact of Christian values on this recently amalgamated primary school. Because pupils are now receiving an enriched curriculum based on Christian values from the time they enter Nursery, standards are beginning to rise both in Key Stage One and in Key Stage Two. Opportunities are taken throughout the curriculum, but particularly in religious education, to enhance the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. As a result of the previous inspection in the Church of England junior school, dedicated weekly time for reflection is enabling pupils to improve their ability to express their thoughts, emotions and beliefs with greater clarity. The introduction of 'Values Education', as identified in the school development plan, will enable the Christian values to have even greater impact on all pupils. However, pupils of other faiths already speak of how their beliefs are valued and enhanced by the ethos of the school. As a result of training on the Christian distinctiveness of a church school in the early stages of the school's amalgamation, consultation with all stakeholders and the commitment of the staff, relationships amongst staff and pupils of the lower and upper ends of the school are developing well. Due to the clear Christian vision and drive of the headteacher, supported by all staff, when faced with the challenges of staff absence during the past year, the school has continued to function and develop well. The distinctive Christian character is clearly articulated through the quality of display throughout the school, the school website and the importance given to the school values of consideration, aspirations, responsibility and endeavour (CARE), underpinning the ethos and purpose of the school. The positive impact of this on the pupils is apparent from the very few cases of unsociable behaviour and the pupils' eagerness to be involved in a range of charity work.

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

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good because of the importance given to this special time. Weekly church services take place for both Key Stage One and Key Stage Two with a variety of other acts of worship taking place on other days. Daily worship is now in place for Early Years' classes, the Eucharist has been introduced for Year 6 in the summer term and a worship group has been organised to review and evaluate the provision and impact of Collective Worship. There are clear signs that Collective Worship is beginning to impact upon the pupils' views and behaviour as observed in their respectful behaviour in two church services. Singing is a strong feature for many pupils and pupils enjoy taking responsibility for rituals such as carrying the cross and the candles to the altar. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the responses at the beginning and end of worship; they are able to recite the Lord's Prayer and many follow closely the words of the readings. Flexible cross year groupings for Collective Worship are enabling this new primary school to become a more cohesive community. The school has identified areas to improve provision such as pupils leading circle groups and subsequently leading worship. Worship is planned to be inclusive; through the theme of Pentecost pupils were invited to say 'hello' in their native language to represent the experience of the disciples at Pentecost. Governors have begun to involve themselves in the monitoring of Collective Worship and plans are in place to include a governor on the worship planning group.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

The effectiveness of religious education is good because of the commitment of the headteacher, as subject leader, and all members of staff to engage and enthuse the pupils with a subject which pupils see as relevant to their own lives. Religious education is a key priority on the school development plan because of the importance given to the subject in this church school and the need to raise standards. However, standards are now beginning to rise as a result of thorough planning, the provision of an extra short session of religious education to include reflection, the improving communication skills of pupils and the amalgamation of the two schools into one church school. An effective collaboration with other church schools in the area has enabled the school to incorporate good practice. Religious education lessons are enriched through the use of visitors and visits, for example the visit to the Hindu Mandir. Parents speak of the importance they see in this activity. Year 6 pupils showed an increased understanding of Islamic beliefs and practices because of their discussions with a Moslem parent. Teachers are working hard to identify ways of assessment which are not necessarily dependent upon pupils' writing skills. This is a developing area. Governors have become involved in monitoring this subject and a visit report identified strengths in the subject as well as areas for development, such as differentiation. Godly play has recently been introduced into the reception classes, enabling pupils from an early age to learn about Christian beliefs, whilst also having the opportunity to learn about the beliefs of other cultures such as through the study of Chinese New Year.

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

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding because there has been a huge commitment to develop a strong Christian ethos and experience for all pupils in order that they should flourish in this newly amalgamated church primary school. From the earliest discussions regarding the amalgamation of the existing church junior school and the community infant school the school leadership has ensured that all stakeholders have been informed and consulted regarding the nature of a church school. The headteacher, as the existing headteacher of the Church of England Junior School, ensured that the St Clement's congregation was fully informed of the vision for the future primary school as a church school. The partnership with the church is extremely strong because of the commitment of the incumbent to supporting the school in every way she can and because of the involvement of a very large number of volunteers who provide help in a variety of ways. This support is mutual as the school also enables the church to use a variety of resources. Leadership and management are also outstanding because there are clear signs of early impact upon standards and behaviour, for example the gradual improvement of pupils' ability to communicate their thoughts, ideas and emotions. The governing body and senior leaders are also committed to strengthening the involvement of parents and carers within the life of the school. A class assembly was observed where parents for the first time had been invited in to see their children's involvement. Partnerships with the local community are also very strong and the school is providing pupils with an increasing number of opportunities to engage with the wider community. One example of this was the attendance at the Chelsea Flower Show by two pupils to exhibit the school's UK prize winning Gerbera. Pupils also provide harvest gifts for the local community based on the school's Christian commitment to serve those in need. The capacity for this school to improve is excellent because of the strength of the commitment of the leadership and management and the early signs of impact upon the pupils.