



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Longlands Close, Crossbrook Street, Waltham Cross EN8 8LU

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority: Hertfordshire

Date of inspection: 31 March 2016

Date of last inspection: February 2011

School's unique reference number: 117428

Headteacher: Sarah Chaloner

Inspector's name and number: Mel Adams NS 58

School context

Holy Trinity is a smaller than average one form entry primary school. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average and continues to increase. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, with a small percentage for whom English is an additional language. The number with identified special educational needs is in line with the national level. A large percentage of pupils are from Christian backgrounds representing a range of Christian denominations. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of changes in staffing and governance.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity Primary as a Church of England school are good.

- The extent to which the school leaders and governors undertake their responsibilities with a clear focus on each child as a unique individual in God's creation
- The role of Year 6 pupil chaplains which models both student leadership and school Christian values
- The day to day application of Christian values by children and staff which supports personal, spiritual and academic development

Areas to improve

- Build on recent whole school developments in strategic planning by systematically aligning this with church school evaluation in order to improve pupils' learning and progress in light of the Christian vision for the development of the whole child.
- Further develop the teaching of religious education [RE], ensuring that gaps in subject knowledge are identified and effective training provided in order to improve pupils' learning in religious education
- Embed pupil leadership of collective worship and pupils' practical application of Christian values by extending the current pupil chaplain role to other pupils.

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

Pupils, parents, staff and governors readily articulate the Christian values, which are seen as an essential and dynamic element in creating an ethos in which pupils can flourish and develop as whole people. The recently reviewed ethos and aims statement ensures that the school, with Christian values at the heart, sees all members of the school community, described by the headteacher, as 'unique individuals within God's creation.' This vision is practised through care and support of all pupils, and especially for those who may be experiencing a range of difficulties. Attendance overall is in line with national expectations, and where there are those for whom attendance is a challenge, school staff, driven by the shared values, work in innovative ways to support improvements and raise aspirations. An understanding of spiritual development, articulated by the vicar as 'a sense of awe and wonder, leading to God and worship, our neighbour and ourselves' is evident in collective worship and religious education. The school has rightly identified spiritual, moral, social and cultural education [SMSC] as an area to be included in lesson planning for different subject areas. Pupils of all ages are willing to offer ideas and, where this is supported by careful teacher questioning, their understanding is further developed. Relationships throughout the school are good. The shared Christian values, which staff and children readily refer to, underpin the management of behaviour, which is good. Pupils describe how referring to values, such as respect and co-operation, helps them individually and as a class group to make the right choices about their behaviour. As a result, personal development is supported and this leads them to focus well on their learning. The rich multi-culture of the school gives pupils awareness that Christians worship in different ways and that there are churches around the world. Pupils have some understanding of different faiths, which they see as important in helping them to understand and respect, and they are able to articulate how this makes them good citizens. They talk about their experiences in school, including how they are applying the values and how their learning in RE helps them to understand Christianity and other faiths. They readily acknowledge that their learning in RE can support their individual faith journey as well as teaching and reinforcing the values they hear about in daily worship. As a result, RE is significant in further supporting SMSC development and the Christian character of the school.

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

Pupils and staff participate in daily collective worship, which enables them to grow in understanding of the Christian faith. Themes are often inspired by the Bible and explored through values such as courage, compassion and forgiveness. These are adopted and practised in their day-to-day lives in school. Beginning with music and the lighting of a candle with three wicks, pupils are able to describe these as representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This creates a setting in which pupils are able to explain that, 'God is with us'. They appreciate the opportunity as described by one child to 'come together to worship, pray and show respect'. They enjoy singing worship songs and are able to explain that the words have meaning which helps them to understand more about God and Jesus. Parents, who attend some acts of worship in school and in the church, are appreciative of the values such as care, respect and belief, as their children speak of them at home. They recognise that these values are adopted by the children and support their daily life in school, helping them to make right choices, supporting good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils confidently respond to question and answer sessions that deepen their understanding. The role of pupil chaplains from Year 6 in leading acts of worship is greatly appreciated by the pupils as they describe how it helps them to understand the values and how to use them at other times in school. The chaplains plan the worship based on themes suggested by the headteacher, and describe how they develop their presentations in ways they believe will help children to understand. The further involvement of pupils in leading worship is recognised as in need of development in order to sustain the good practice developed by the current chaplains. Pupils believe that their worship makes the school a better place, and that without the understanding of the values it promotes, behaviour would not be as good. Classroom reflection areas, by displaying the current value being considered in collective worship, allow classes and individuals to reflect and respond during the day. This ensures that the values are integrated into pupils' learning experiences. The headteacher leads worship, along with members of staff, members of the clergy team and occasionally members from other denominations. Through attendance at church for festivals, pupils have some understanding of the church year. The headteacher informally evaluates and plans worship through discussions with staff, pupils and the vicar,

but systematic monitoring and evaluation are not in place. Pupils participate with respect and dignity in prayer. There are times throughout the day for prayer, at lunch time and at the end of the day which pupils say helps them to remember the importance of their school as a church school. Pupils are encouraged to pray at other times, as in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils were confident to pray spontaneously. Collective worship contributes significantly to SMSC development for pupils throughout the school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Religious education is good because pupils enjoy their learning, attain well and make good progress in line with the core subjects. These have recently been in line with national expectations. The headteacher leads and manages RE, with a clear vision to deepen pupils understanding of faith and their growth in religious literacy. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson, which enabled pupils to grapple with the concept of forgiveness inspired by the Easter story. A pupil was able to offer, 'You need to be a strong person to forgive'. Where teaching enables pupils to answer and raise pertinent questions, they are developing skills that lead to an understanding of how religion affects the lives believers of different faiths. This is particularly strong in their understanding of the Christian faith, where the knowledge of some pupils is impressive. As a result, they are beginning to apply these skills to other religions such as Judaism, where pupils consider the importance of the Passover meal for Jewish people. Teaching is being supported by the purchase of a new scheme of work to strengthen teacher subject knowledge and assessment. However, there continue to be some gaps in knowledge and understanding which can lead to misconceptions. The headteacher is aware of this and is planning to work with the vicar to provide training for staff. Assessments are made each half term and school summary data indicates that the majority of pupils are achieving at age related expectations. Pupils work in RE books indicates that this is the case overall. Marking and feedback are developing and where effective it can lead to pupils making further progress, although this is not consistent. Pupils are appreciative of RE and are able to explain how, 'it makes us think deeper and expands our understanding'. They enjoy learning about different faiths and talk about how their knowledge and understanding helps them to respect those of different faiths. Visits are made to different places of worship during Key Stage 1, which pupils speak about with interest and enthusiasm. As these help them to understand how members of different faiths believe and worship, pupils say they say that they would like to do more frequent visits. Pupils clearly express the relationship between their studies in RE and their experiences in collective worship. They describe how the values they learn about are an important in helping them to focus on all their learning. As a result, RE makes a good contribution to SMSC development. RE is monitored by the headteacher, and vicar. Lesson observations and book scrutinies have identified future areas for development, such as teachers' subject knowledge.

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

School leaders and governors have developed robust systems of monitoring and evaluation following the Ofsted inspection in 2014. This has led to standards rising throughout the school. The headteacher and governors have a shared vision for the school 'as a church school first and foremost'. This results in a desire for every child to become confident citizens, motivated by faith. Christian values are seen as a 'thread running through the school'. Governors and the headteacher see this focus as a driving force in their meticulous monitoring of children's learning and progress in the core subjects. Statutory requirements are met for RE, which is timetabled weekly for all classes and there is a daily act of worship. School leaders are developing monitoring, evaluation and planning for developments related to RE and collective worship, reporting regularly to governors. Due to changes in the governing body, along with a period without a vicar, the programme of monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school is not as robust as that for other systems within the school. The headteacher and governing body recognise this and have demonstrated their commitment by placing church school development at the head of the school improvement plan. They see this as 'drawing together all aspects of a commitment to the 'whole child', including their spiritual, moral, and academic development'. The vicar has a clear understanding of her new responsibilities and of how her role can contribute to improvements, most recently with RE. The headteacher leads very effectively, ensuring that the vision and values are a significant foundation for all members of the school community. These are evident in all

aspects of school life, including the curriculum. As a result, SMSC development is strong. Parents suggest that the pupils are given 'emotional and spiritual stability' in order to learn. This is very much in accord with the perspective of governors and school leaders. They recognise how the schools provision as a church school 'connects with the children's spirituality'. Parents feel confident to approach the school and are full of praise for the way that any concerns are managed. Governors and school leaders have benefited from a range of support, including from the diocese, in order to develop their roles as church school leaders.

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