



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

The Cathedral Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Victoria Road
Chelmsford
CMI IPA

Diocese:

Local authority: Essex

Date of inspection: 17th June 2014

Date of last inspection:

School's unique reference number: 115289

Headteacher: Anthea Kenna

Inspector's name and number: Dr Duncan Ramsey 697

School Context

The school is larger than the average sized primary school. Pupils are drawn from a wide catchment area. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or those with statements of special needs is high. The school provides a breakfast club each morning.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Cathedral School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong Christian character of the school is demonstrated through every aspect of school life.
- Collective worship is of a high quality and valued by all members the school community.
- Outstanding senior leadership that has a clear vision of what makes a special Church of England School and is constantly striving to make the school better and better.
- Prayer plays a central role in school life and is considered of vital importance by all members of the school community.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that more detailed feedback is given to pupils in religious education [RE] lessons so that they can make outstanding progress.
- To develop a system for assessment in RE which allows all staff to monitor the progress of pupils more fully.
- To develop quiet spaces in the school grounds so that pupils have more opportunities for quiet reflection during break times.

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

The Christian values of the school are at the core of all aspects of school life. Excellent relationships between all members of the school community are firmly grounded in biblical

teachings. The Christian character of the school has a positive impact on standards as almost all pupils reach levels in line with or above the national expectations, making good progress in subjects such as reading, writing and maths. The schools Christian value of inclusion in all areas means that there have been no exclusions for many years and attendance is better than the national average. The Christian values that are developed each year provide a focus for school academic improvement, the development of excellent relationships in school and good behaviour. Each year new school values are chosen in partnership with the pupils and this year's values of "vision, values and vigour" have been used as a means for raising academic standards and improving the motivation and self esteem of pupils. Pupils talk confidently about how these values are lived out in school life, for example in the way year 6 pupils' care deeply for the younger children and are proud to look after them in the playground. The values are linked closely to examples from Jesus' life and pupils link these stories to the way they behave in school. In the school entrance hall there is a "worship" table that actively promotes the spiritual nature of the school. All around there are Christian signs and symbols and high quality displays relating to prayer and bible stories. These contribute well to the development of high levels of spirituality in pupils. The development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. The strong links with the Cathedral contribute effectively to the spiritual development of the pupils. Joint workshops at the Cathedral for choristers and musicians, and a shared year 5 exploration day have all contributed in this area. Partnerships with a Kenyan school and a school in London have been thoughtfully developed so that pupils have an awareness of life in a multi-cultural city and also in another country. Both partnerships have helped pupils at The Cathedral School develop excellent attitudes towards valuing each other, irrespective of their ethnic background. Pupils say there is very little bullying in the school and discussions with parents show that any issues that do occur are dealt with quickly and in line with Christian principles. All members of staff care deeply for the well-being of the pupils who say they feel, safe, secure and valued. Pupils are very proud to attend The Cathedral School because as one child said "it is a very special school."

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

Collective worship lies at the heart of school life and is given a high priority. Learners are highly engaged during times of worship and are given a wide variety of high quality experiences which give excellent support to their spiritual development? Pupils say it is one of their favourite parts of the school day. In school visitors such as Father Simon from the Cathedral provide challenging acts of worship that stimulate pupils thought. During the inspection an act of worship was observed in which pupils thought about passports and how each passport was distinctive. Clear teaching and excellent questioning helps pupils think deeply about how each and every one of them is distinctive in God's eyes. Other visitors from a wide range of churches provide pupils with thoughtful times of worship on a daily basis. The pupils understanding of the Trinity is developed well. This awareness comes through a clearly planned programme of acts of worship and good teaching within the Religious Education curriculum. The involvement of pupils in leading worship is outstanding. The school worship group are regularly involved in planning and leading assemblies. They are given considerable responsibility for delivering high quality acts of worship. Recently the worship group led the school in developing a new school prayer. They spent time researching bible prayers, sought the views of parents and presented their suggestions to the whole school as part of an act of worship. This helped develop their knowledge of prayer in the bible and strengthened their Christian leadership skills. Other groups of pupils are involved in evaluating the acts of worship and they make regular suggestions about how worship can be improved or developed. Pupils have a good understanding of the style and structure of Anglican worship. Prayer is another strength of the collective worship in school. Pupils pray regularly each day, at lunchtime and the end of the day. Pupils enjoy praying at every opportunity and the pupil's prayer group and adult prayer group are highly valued. This helps pupils come together to pray for issues that concern them developing their level of spirituality. A Eucharist is held regularly and this plays an important part in bringing the school community together. Pupils play an active part in leading this and many take part as active communicants. The programme of acts of worship is based around the Anglican calendar. The

extensive use of bible stories in these times deepens pupils knowledge of scripture and helps the understand and appreciate the Church year and its festivals.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

The teaching of religious education (RE) is given a strong emphasis in school and standards are improving as a result of recent monitoring by governors and the subject co-ordinator. The curriculum is planned in detail and provides a wide range of stimulating and challenging experiences. Teaching is good and often better and this means that pupils are making above average progress in all Key Stages. The achievement of pupils in R.E is broadly in line with that of other core subjects such as English and mathematics. Lessons are planned to provide a range of learning opportunities and include high levels of pupil's involvement. High quality discussion and effective questioning characterises lessons observed during the inspection, both of which effectively developed pupils' learning. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, focussing on developing pupils understanding of the Ascension and Pentecost, the teacher used his very good subject knowledge to encourage a pupil discussion on the meaning of these terms. Pupils respond enthusiastically to questions that encourage them to use their biblical knowledge to answer and then took part in a lively class debate related to the topic helping them to make good progress in developing their understanding. In a Key Stage 1 class the teacher used a range of practical activities to help pupils think about the meaning of a Christening ceremony. The behaviour of pupils is excellent and they work well with their talk partners to discuss what Christenings mean. Scrutiny of pupil's work shows that faster progress would be made if more detailed feedback was given about how their work could be improved and more challenge was given to the able pupils. The assessment of R.E. which takes place at the end of each half term does not give leaders a full enough picture of the progress pupils are making

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

School leaders and governors have high expectations for every aspect of school life and as a result the school is improving constantly. The school website is a good example of the clear Christian status of the school that is promoted by the Governors and the head teacher. The leadership of pupils is very good. They take part in School Council, Worship Group, Eco Group and the Pupil Prayer Group. The quality of self-evaluation in school is outstanding. The wide involvement of pupils in leadership roles deepens their knowledge of the Bible, prayer and the Anglican tradition. The school knows itself well and has a clear idea of what its strengths and areas for development are. Decisive leadership is acting to raise standards further in R.E. The impact of governors is outstanding and their role in monitoring and challenging the school is well developed. An example of outstanding practice is the joint lesson observations that take place between the R.E governor and the R.E subject leader. Activities such as this means governors know the school very well. The headteacher has made excellent links with a wide range of organisations such as churches, other schools and the Cathedral. These all add considerably to the development of the school as a church school. Parents see themselves as partners in the life of the school. They feel listened to when they have suggestions for improvements and they say that teachers are always ready to meet with them when they want to talk about their child. The partnership between the Cathedral and the school is particularly strong and provides a firm foundation for the success of the school and development of its Christian character. The school has made good progress dealing with the issues raised in the last inspection, particularly with respect to the involvement of governors in the life of the school. The outdoor environment has been developed well but there are not enough quiet spaces to provide areas of reflection for pupils during their break time. Governors have a good understanding of the need for succession planning and have plans in place to develop several staff as future church school leaders.

SIAMS report June 2014 The Cathedral V.A School, Chelmsford CMI IPA