



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Luke's Church of England Primary School

Church Road
Tiptree, Colchester
Essex
CO5 0SU

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex
Dates of inspection: 14.06.2013
Date of last inspection: 31.03.2009
School's unique reference number: 115082
Headteacher: Wendy Enguell
Inspector's name and number: Rosemary Morgan 64

School context

St Luke's Church of England Primary School has 298 pupils on roll. Situated in the village of Tiptree it serves pupils from the village and beyond. The majority of pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is in line with the national average. Out of hours services are provided on site for pupils and the local community. The school and church share the site and have very close links.

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

The school serves and works as a caring Christian community with very close links between Church, school and the village. Very distinct Christian values permeate all aspects of the school's work and as a result of this children and adults feel valued, supported and included.

Established strengths

- The caring Christian ethos of the school in which all are valued, enabling pupils' personal development to be outstanding.
- The shared sense of ownership and community which is founded on a commitment to and an understanding of the school's aims and values.
- The ever strengthening partnership between school and Church.
- The strong sense of 'team' which is communicated to great effect by pupils and adults alike.

Focus for development

- To further promote the Christian foundation of the school by including more aspects of the Anglican tradition in worship.
- To build on the significance of collective worship by involving pupils even more in the leadership of worship and in measuring its impact.

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

A supportive welcoming Christian family community has been created through the dedication and commitment of all staff and governors. The whole school environment is attractive and thought-provoking; a range of carefully chosen artefacts, pictures and quotations enable learners to interact, wonder and reflect meaningfully about their faith and their feelings. Pupils subscribe to the ethos, living out the Gospel Values in their respect for each other and the wider community, stating, *'There are friends you can count on'* and *'People will always help you'*. Consequently pupil behaviour is exemplary, attendance is above national average and pupils' academic progress continues to rise, with Key Stage 2 children making significant progress in all core subjects. There is a strong sense of teamwork, evidenced by both the shared focus of continuous improvement to ensure academic standards remain high, and by the quality of relationships.

Pupils and adults talk of 'our school' and 'our Church' and this sense of partnership is evidenced by the very strong links between school, Church and local community. The school's Christian character shapes its approach to ensuring the well-being of all pupils. The role of the 'Well-being Mentor' is highlighted by parents, staff and pupils. Her programmes to support parenting, social skills and 'Growing Together' are recognised and utilised within the school and the wider community, leading in particular to a successful passage through the school and transition to secondary education. School Council members have a mature understanding of their responsibility to others and their own contribution to school life, highlighting changes they have initiated, such as decking for wheelchair access and fundraising for a diabetes charity.

Children show exceptional courtesy to visitors and to each other and 'Tour Guides' were proud to show the memorial windows in the entrance area of the school, one commenting *'It is really peaceful here'*. Displays are enriching, evidencing aspects of the Christian faith, its values and foundation and the school's multicultural links further afield. Pupils have a good understanding of diversity and difference, for example a recent project to correspond with a school in South Africa is the source of great interest pupils commenting on similarities in curriculum but contrasting school buildings.

Religious Education [RE], complimented by a programme of 'Philosophy for Children', makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are excited by Bible stories and showed a good level of religious literacy; this is seen in the way that the pupils discussed both the tales of David and Goliath and of Cain and Abel; they identified very powerfully the range of emotions within the stories. They were respectful of others' perspectives and showed both tolerance and understanding.

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

Collective worship is perceived by staff and pupils as centrally important to the life of the school. A programme of worship themes has been planned by the co-ordinator in co-operation with the Rector. Thoughtful consideration has been given to the topics for worship; these reflect Christian values linking where appropriate to Bible stories as well as to the Anglican calendar. Regular visits from a range of religious leaders (introduced since the last inspection) have enhanced the children's understanding of other faiths.

The active involvement of the Rector in leading worship within the Foundation Stage department, as well as fortnightly in the adjoining church, has impacted greatly on the school's distinctiveness. Pupils contribute to church services, with their own prayers and songs of worship; they enjoy the opportunity to use the church saying, *'This is our service'*. The church is also visited for a range of study purposes as well as worship. A particular highlight for the children is the Christingle Service; all children participated and the school council were keen to explain the significance of the orange and the candle.

Through a variety of creative approaches, the school is enabling pupils to develop their understanding of prayer. A thinking candle is a focus within daily worship, and pupils see this as a symbol for prayer time, a boy explaining, *'When I pray I feel a light is switched on'*. Prayer is a daily part of the school routine and recognised by pupils as, *'My moment to talk to God'*. Pupils also contribute their own personal prayers to a Prayer Tree. Staff attend worship regularly, appreciating the opportunity for affirmation, described by one

teacher as, '*A sense of belonging*'. Pupils display a general understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit but this awareness needs to be developed further. They make connections with the stories they hear and their wider implications and world issues, referring to Daniel's courage in the lions' den, relating this to staying strong in challenging situations. A parent commented that her child's response to news coverage was to say, '*We have to respect differences*'. Pupils prepare the hall for worship and participate in it through readings and drama. The worship is monitored by governors and the co-ordinator with thoughts gathered from staff and pupils. As a result more opportunities have been created for pupil involvement. Pupils would indeed welcome further occasions for participation in the planning, leadership and evaluation of worship, for example by identifying criteria for 'a successful assembly'.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors have a clear strong vision rooted in Christian values, which is communicated with great effect to all groups. The sense of Christian community is powerful, with staff, governors, parents and pupils united in their mission and purpose. Children and adults are proud of their school and the way in which Gospel values are lived out in daily life, a child referring to, '*Turning the other cheek*' about a playground incident and a teacher commenting, '*Our efforts are noticed and appreciated*'. The school's vision statement was reviewed by staff and governors recently, and their values, as embedded within the statement, manifest themselves in all aspects of school life. There is a commitment to the headteacher's aim of '*continuing the journey of excellence*'. The governing body and the senior teachers have organised a system of teams to take responsibility for the aspects of governing body management. Teams are comprised of governors and a range of staff membership as appropriate to the team role. This sense of ownership is reflected in the high standards to which all subscribe. A particularly pertinent example is the Community Learning Team the role of which has expanded since the last inspection. Their remit now encompasses the monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctiveness through the use of the diocesan self-evaluation document. Priorities such as the inclusion of more explicit Christian content in key stage class worship are identified as a result. Great consideration has been given to succession planning and the excellent communication between governors and staff provides a strong base for the future. The partnership with parents is exceptional. A parent discussion group meets termly. The headteacher and staff are acknowledged to be approachable and understanding. Parents' views are sought regularly and they feel part of the school and proud to be so, one parent commenting, '*It is a shining example of family and community working together as one*'. New parents are welcomed and involved; a foundation stage meeting is used for children to share their 'learning journey' pictorial and written records with their parents and carers; subsequent comments underline how much this process is valued.

R.E. and collective worship are co-ordinated very effectively; the R.E. Co-ordinator monitors standards thoroughly with clear plans for future improvement priorities. The worship Co-ordinator appointed at the start of this academic year has a similar focus and there is close co-operation between the co-ordinators to ensure continuous improvement.

SIAMS report June 2013 St Luke's C of E Primary School, Tiptree, Essex CO5 0SU