



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bishop William Ward Church of England VA Primary School

Coach Road, Colchester

Essex CO6 4AT

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex

Dates of inspection: 24 September 2015

Date of last inspection: November 2010

School's unique reference number: 115144

Headteacher: Toby Bull

Inspector's name and number: Ann Bard 728

School context

Bishop William Ward is a one form entry voluntary aided primary school that has expanded in recent years. The headteacher, appointed in September 2014 is supported by a long-standing deputy headteacher. The incumbent has been in post since July 2014. The number of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding, due to social disadvantage, is slightly lower than the national average, as are those with special needs or disabilities. A small number of pupils attend a church or other place of worship outside of their involvement with school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop William Ward as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Explicitly Christian values successfully underpin school life: these are taught and used as models for living.
- Worship opportunities that allow pupils and adults time to reflect and pray: this leads to a reflective and prayerful approach at other times of the school day.
- The committed and focused Christian leadership which promotes the school as distinctively Christian whilst respecting diversity and being inclusive of all.
- Focussed planning and opportunities which actively support pupil's spiritual and moral development, especially through the use of challenging questions.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that marking in religious education (RE) is consistent and effective so that pupils know how to improve.
- Develop and explain Anglican elements of worship so that pupils demonstrate understanding of their significance.

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

The strong and distinctive Christian character of the school is evident across all areas of school life and is central to the school's ethos and vision. In school, numerous examples of the Christian values of compassion, justice, peace, forgiveness, hope, trust, wisdom and perseverance are evident in relationships, display and actions. Pupils understand the biblical roots of the values through stories and parables: for example, how the Good Samaritan showed compassion. These have a strong influence on curriculum planning and teaching. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply about them and about practical ways in which they can be demonstrated in their own lives and in the school setting. As a result of the effective underpinning of Christian values on the life of the school, academic attainment and progress is consistently above the national average. Vulnerable pupils make at least as much progress as their peers because the school considers how each individual's needs will best be served. Attendance is very good because pupils enjoy and anticipate coming to school. There have been no recent exclusions and every effort is made to accommodate those who might be at risk of exclusion, within the school setting, as befits the school's Christian ethos. Pupil's behaviour is excellent because of high expectations and the Christian love and care that they experience. Many extra-curricular activities are offered and good use is made of school resources. Provision for spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is exemplary. Spiritual development is promoted extremely well through RE, worship and in the curriculum. It is one of the key drivers that teachers use when planning lessons. Carefully planned work and activities encourage and challenge pupils to consider the Christian values in learning. Relationships are very strong and reflect the school's Christian foundation very well. Mutual respect is well modelled by the leadership and all staff. As a result, pupils feel listened to and cared for. Pupils feel safe in school and say that there is very little bullying. They support each other and listen to each other's views respectfully. As one pupil commented, 'People care about people here'. Through RE pupils have a detailed knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a world faith. They are appropriately excited and challenged by their learning in RE. They recognise that RE helps them appreciate the diversity of belief and practice in God's world. Consequently, RE supports the whole school ethos and values extremely well.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher, ably supported by other leaders, the incumbent and visitors has resulted in worship which is varied, engaging, inspirational and highly valued. A worship team of pupils regularly plan and lead all aspects of worship. This is an area that has significantly improved since the previous inspection. These acts of worship enhance the pupils' experiences and are a highlight of the worship cycle. There are detailed plans in place to include more pupils in the worship team. Pupils, staff and governors are actively involved in evaluating all aspects of worship. This results in changes that enrich the worship experience for all who attend. Quality music plays an extremely important part in worship. A good range of modern worship songs are known and sung enthusiastically. A positive focus during worship on the school's Christian values supports pupils in reflecting on the impact that these have on their daily lives. Worship is viewed as a time to come together as a community and as a time to reflect and pray. The hall is used effectively to support themes in worship and to make it a special space. Displays of pupil's responses to the words of the hymn 'When I survey the Wondrous Cross' clearly demonstrate that worship extends well beyond the allocated daily act. Prayer is a very strong feature of school life. A prayer area in the library is well used. All pupils contributed to making a beautiful cross which forms the central focus. The coloured stones used for the cross were chosen and placed individually by pupils who wrote a reflection on what significance the choice of stone had for them. There is a strong focus on the Bible, especially on Jesus' life and teaching, in acts of worship and on how the messages given translate into daily life. Pupils are encouraged to reflect deeply on how they should respond, both in prayer and

through practical actions. Many aspects of Anglican traditions are used, although learners do not readily understand them as distinctively Anglican. They know the cycle of the church year and its major festivals and speak confidently about times such as Harvest and Lent and how this makes an impact on what happens in school and church.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The school has addressed the issue identified in the previous inspection to include differentiated questioning. There is clear evidence of the impact of this in work and from lesson observations. As a result of strong leadership and good teaching most pupils make good progress. Assessment data shows that the majority of achievement in RE is in line with age related expectations and many pupils achieve more highly. The diocesan syllabus is used for planning lessons and RE is also appropriately incorporated into other areas of the curriculum. Pupils enjoy and value RE and the range of activities which help them to learn such as role-play and drama. They develop a range of skills such as evaluation, analysis and reflection. Pupils regularly discuss their views about religion and do so with sensitivity and respect for others. Some older pupils are able to make simple comparisons between Christian beliefs with that of other faiths studied. Progress is assessed at the end of each unit. However, teachers' written comments are inconsistent. They do not always appropriately refer to what has been achieved in RE and how it could be improved. Consequently, pupils are unsure about the progress they are making and the next steps in their learning in RE.

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

Leaders at all levels are committed to Bishop William Ward as a Church school. The shared Christian vision is very well articulated by all and is celebrated as a vital part of school life. The appointment of the current headteacher demonstrates this: governors actively sought someone who could continue to further raise standards and re-energise the school's Christian vision. Due to this Christian vision there is a strong focus on the needs of the individual. Governors are practically involved with key aspects of school life, especially in the development of its distinctively Christian character. Appropriately, detailed work is being done to identify how British values can be incorporated into the school's Christian values. Governors demonstrate a very good understanding of the impact of new initiatives. This is very well supported by termly headteacher's report which has 'school distinctiveness' as a standing item. The chair of governors knows the school extremely well and is actively involved in monitoring and evaluating aspects of school life. Consequently, he is able to provide effective challenge and support. Statutory requirements for a voluntary aided church school are met. RE and worship are recognised as important contributors to the school's Christian ethos and values and are well resourced. Staff, including teaching assistants, takes full advantage of courses and training offered by the Diocese and the school is supported well by their link adviser. School self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous. Leaders have a detailed understanding of individuals' needs. This enables them to strive to ensure that academic and personal development needs are met. This is supported very well by a detailed and effective school improvement plan which appropriately incorporates areas relating to church school distinctiveness. These plans rightly identify opportunities to develop middle leaders and new governors in leading within a church school. Since 2014 the school has looked afresh at its already established Christian ethos and has successfully built on and developed it further. Parents speak warmly about the welcoming, caring and inclusive nature of the school as a Church school. They recognise and appreciate that the school cares for 'the whole child'. Partnerships with the local community are strong and leaders actively seek out opportunities to be involved in it. The school and church work very closely together to engage families in the village through a church activity based at the school to which all are invited.

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