

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mandeville Road, Marks Tey, Colchester, Essex CO6 1HL

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chelmsford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Essex
Date of inspection	17 January 2017
Date of last inspection	January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VC Primary 115081
Headteacher	Leila Berkeley
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Currently there are 189 pupils on roll making St Andrew's primary school slightly above average in size. The proportion of pupils for whom extra funding is received due to social disadvantage is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below average. The headteacher has been in post for 14 years. The religious education [RE] subject leader has just finished her NQT year and is new to this role. St Andrew's is one of 23 schools who are part of the Tiptree and Stanway Consortium. The school is the recipient of Investors in People and Healthy Schools Awards.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England school are good

- The commitment of the headteacher, clergy and governors to serve the staff, pupils and their families in this Christian community as part of the St Andrew's school family.
- The dedication of the St Andrew's 'Open the Book' team to unfolding stories from the Bible in weekly worship. This mission, together with the school's Christian values, enriches pupils' Christian journey and provides a firm foundation for life.
- The importance of belonging and acceptance within this Christian environment enables pupils to grow in confidence and encourages deep thinking. This is especially seen in reflection time and worship when pupils write and read their own prayers.

Areas to improve

- Extend the systematic monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and RE by governors and pupil. This informs future planning and contributes to the school's distinctive Christian character.
- Ensure the new RE subject leader is well supported in her role of leading and managing this key aspect of Christian distinctiveness.
- Enrich pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and key times in the church year, such as Ascension-tide and Pentecost, as part of their worshipping experience in this church school.

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

St Andrew's school is very proud of the rich curriculum offered to its pupils within a caring and inclusive Christian context. Above all, the school has high expectations, but thoughtfully responds to the needs of different situations in serving the children and their parents. Consequently, all members of the St Andrew's community work together in

'achieving our personal best'. This is realised by working hard on the Christian values the school has chosen. To this end, each year group has adopted a core value. For example, Year 1 value thankfulness and Year 2 focus on love and kindness, seen in action as praying with each other. Whilst Year 3 pupils cite trust as meaning 'you can rely on someone', Year 4 prize peace. Year 5 have produced a book of respectful people and Year 6 a little book of honesty and forgiveness, all celebrating the school's values in everyday life. These Christian values are articulated well and lived out across all year groups. At St Andrew's there is 'always room at the inn' where all are welcomed. This results in good attendance and positive relationships and behaviour, with the support of parents. One parent spoke highly of the way the boys in their family had been 'so blessed' because of the patience, kindness and understanding of the staff. This is because, as an inclusive school, the very specific needs of children are met. As an expression of Christian foundation, the school has put in place robust and holistic mapping provision using specialist teachers for its vulnerable groups as well as for the more able pupils. As a result, progress and attainment is good throughout the school, with St Andrew's in the top 25% of schools in Essex for attainment and in line with the national average for progress. One of the school's successes is the use of 'Growth Mind-set' which has challenged pupils who 'used to have a fixed mind-set' to think 'outside the box' and achieve even higher. Consequently, the school provides a community where pupils can learn from their mistakes in a spirit of forgiveness, trust and respect because the school's Christian values pervade everything. St Andrew's pupils encounter different communities and cultures through worship and RE, which is good. This is well supported by their charity fundraising and awareness of global events, which often stem from celebrating Harvest. Pupils say they enjoy RE and 'like learning about different traditions and how many times they pray'. Their knowledge of the key events in the life of Jesus is good, especially the Christmas and Easter story. One pupil reflected deeply on the end of Jesus' life and his painful death in a poem. Consequently, RE makes a good contribution to the Christian character of the school and to pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, pupils are less secure in their knowledge of the events of Ascension-tide and Pentecost. They enjoy asking big questions, for example, about heaven. They also value their school grounds and use well the spaces for reflection these afford, such as the copse. One pupil on the school council welcomes extending the use of the reading shack to include Bibles and religious texts to help nurture pupils' faith in daily life. Pupils' knowledge of Christianity is good, as one might expect in a church school. However, pupils say they would welcome more visits and visitors to enhance their learning about Islam and Judaism. The school correctly acknowledges this as an area for development in supporting the school's vision and ethos to promote respect and understanding.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The rector and the 'Open the Book' team from St Andrew's Church are instrumental in unfolding the stories of the Bible every Wednesday in school. Such commitment results in the pupils applying the message of the teaching they hear and act out to their lives. They reflect on how they can make a difference. Good examples include pupils saying that 'Open the Book' worship 'helps me to understand more and my favourite one is about the widow who put in the most as it's all she had'. Others go on to say, 'I love all the Bible stories, but my favourite is Jesus' first miracle. It's amazing how he turned water into wine'. Prayer is central to all school worship. For example, after each 'Open the Book' worship, pupils have the freedom to express themselves in prayer. This importance is demonstrated in valuing children's own prayers which are used in worship and feature on the newsletter to parents every week. Pupils say, part of praying is 'asking God to help us'. One pupil said, prayer is special to me, asking God to help other people in the world'. They are beginning to use The Lord's Prayer more and link forgiveness to the core values. Pupils are deeply reflective, resulting in some commenting, 'as the candle wick burns down, God is getting rid of our sins'. Consequently, pupils are growing in the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The school correctly identifies the need to develop this awareness in pupils which has been greatly helped by introducing Soul Space. This was a whole week of workshops for the pupils with a focus on the school's values led by the church community. It took place last year and was a great success in helping nurture pupils' spiritual journeys. Pupils asked big questions of God, with comments such as, 'can you please help the world to stay in peace'. They are able to reflect on 'God being invisible' and 'God sticking by you'. To this end, the school is committed to enriching pupils' spiritual development in planning Soul Space as an annual event. Church services especially help pupils understand important aspects of Anglican traditions in worship. Currently, pupils plan and lead worship and are taking on more responsibility, such as the one led by the school council in anti-bullying week. However, the school correctly identifies that more frequent evaluation of worship, involving an exchange of viewpoints between pupils and governors, is important for the school's future direction. For example, music is a strength of the school and pupils say they would value playing their instruments in worship.

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

Above all, the headteacher, clergy and governors are committed to serving the staff, the pupils and their families. This results in a well led Christian community which is welcoming, inspiring and supportive of the wellbeing of

everyone. Indeed, staff comment, 'the school really lives its values, both with the children and staff. It is built on the foundation of respect, kindness, honesty and trust.' Consequently, adults and pupils thrive and succeed. This is because the school is committed to Investors in People. As a bronze award holder, the school firmly believes a happy team is a good team. Governors support staff as part of the ethos and culture of the school encompasses building relationships and incorporating reflection as part of their personal and professional journey. Moreover, parents are happy because their children are happy and subsequently enjoy their learning and achieve well in this very inclusive school which is at the heart of the community. Parents say they are 'really impressed with worship as it has made their children grow in confidence'. They speak highly of how 'the children can stand up and speak in worship from the age of four'. RE and worship both meet statutory requirements. The school has addressed all areas from the previous denominational inspection and continues to ensure these aspects remain a focus and have a deepening impact on school life. However, the school rightly acknowledges that support is needed for the new RE subject leader, who has recently finished qualifying as a teacher. Consequently, the headteacher has been working to support her in conjunction with the diocesan RE adviser. The good relationship with the RE adviser is making a positive impact in the school. An example of this is the RE subject leader attending training on the new resource, 'Understanding Christianity'. Consequently, she led a staff meeting at the end of last term, resulting in the school using an image of a Nigerian nativity scene to capture pupils' thoughtful imaginations. Gathering pupils' views and looking at books was previously carried out by the headteacher. As recognised by senior leaders, including governors, RE's contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character is not clearly evidenced. Taking into account the views of teachers, pupils and parents regarding RE and the regular monitoring of the pupils' work is underdeveloped. Whilst governors are supportive, they acknowledge this work needs to be more rigorous. RE has its own action plan and is an important part of the school's strategic plan. Community links are good and extend beyond the partnership the church has with the school. A good example is the summer fair, which is well attended by parents and other members of the local community. The school benefits from sharing good practice as part of the Tiptree and Stanway Consortium, which includes many church schools.

SIAMS report January 2017 St Andrew's CE VC Primary School, Marks Tey, Colchester, Essex CO6 1HL