

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Luke's (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Church Road, Tiptree, Essex CO5 0SU

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chelmsford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Essex
Date of inspection	18 June 2018
Date of last inspection	June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 115082
Headteacher	Martin Moriarty
Inspector's name and number	Virginia Corbyn 86

School context

Tiptree, Saint Luke's is around average size, drawing pupils from in and around the village. Whilst the percentage of pupils who have special educational needs is in line with the national average, a much higher number of these have an education, health and care plan. The majority are White British, with a below average percentage eligible for school funding due to social disadvantage. A very small number of families attend a church regularly. Since the previous denominational inspection, there have been continuous changes of headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. The current headteacher started at the school in September 2017.

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

- The school's core Christian values and Christian motto are an integral part of the school's journey of improvement as a church school.
- Collective worship is a significant factor in building stability in the school and developing a shared purpose with all stakeholders.
- There is clarity of intent across the headteacher, school leaders and staff which is based on the core Christian values and which results in a mutually supportive community working for the good of all.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that Christian values are explicitly driving academic progress in ways which can be explicitly articulated by all stakeholders.
- Develop the religious education (RE) curriculum, in order to enable all pupils to question, discuss and demonstrate their deeper thinking clearly.
- Involve a greater range of leaders for worship, in order to enrich pupils' understanding and experience of this aspect of school life.
- Consult all stakeholders regularly and formally, so that their views feed directly into the self-evaluation of the school as a church school.

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

The core Christian values of the school are faith, hope, love, forgiveness, compassion thankfulness and responsibility. Pupils know that these are values which Jesus demonstrated and which they should follow. They are more confident in expressing how the school's Christian values affect their behaviour and attitudes than explaining how these values contribute to their learning. The values are increasingly seen as the practical outworking of the Christian motto of, 'know, love, serve; God, Ourselves & Others'. This motto has been introduced over the course of this academic year and by the current headteacher. It has positively helped to re-build confidence and trust in the leaders of the school. This follows a period of instability and turbulence. Although the motto and values are not explicitly articulated by all stakeholders, there is a strong implicit understanding that 'everyone has been brought along on the journey' over the past year. This has been done through creating a strong and inclusive Christian ethos. Staff are confident to use the vocabulary of Christian values in relation to behaviour which is, therefore, very good across the school. As a result, there has been rapid progress for most pupils, taking attainment from well below to almost being in line with national averages, since the appointment of the current headteacher. Where this has not been the case, gaps have been quickly identified, personalised interventions have been put in place and gaps are closing. As a positive expression of its Christian foundation, very good relationships lie at the heart of the school, making sure that the pupils' individual needs are met and that their families are well supported. This is especially apparent in the case of those pupils who have high levels of special educational needs.

Staff and parents rightly speak about the school's success in nurturing the whole child. This means that the school takes the time to value all pupils' talents beyond only the academic, despite the need to address falling standards in recent times. The views of pupils are taken seriously and acted upon across a wide range of aspects of the life of the school community. Spiritual development has been a focus for the school since the previous denominational inspection. This has resulted in a deepening understanding and a wider and more frequent experience of prayer and reflection in school. For example, the prayer spaces events held both in school and in church have offered many practical opportunities for prayer within school. One parent described these events as 'very powerful'. As a result, pupils asked that interactive prayer areas be introduced into their classrooms and these are well used. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good. The values of responsibility and compassion, in particular, help to develop pupils morally and socially. Pupils are able to talk about difference and diversity especially in relation to RE. One Key Stage 2 pupil said, 'People have different beliefs and so we are not all the same, we need to respect their beliefs'. Since adapting the RE curriculum over the past year, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of the major world faiths is beginning to improve. There is, however, a lack of consistency in developing questioning, discussion and clear evidence of deeper thinking.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

This area of school life has improved significantly since the previous denominational inspection. This is because the current headteacher has focused on developing collective worship since his appointment less than a year ago. He has used these times to explore and establish the school's Christian values. This means that there is a shared understanding of these values which pupils and staff are articulating with increasing confidence. Worship is used to promote an age appropriate understanding of Bible stories and of the school's values including through weekly class-based worship. This is planned and led by pupils and there is evidence, within their special class worship books, of how pupils are able to reflect meaningfully with their peers. There is a good level of pupil involvement within this aspect of the life of the school, primarily through the worship council but increasingly through others. This group has raised the profile of worship within school with enthusiasm, setting a good example for others. Pupils speak about regularly learning from the example of Jesus during worship. Although the incumbent leads worship fortnightly, pupils and staff do not currently experience a range of traditions and approaches within their worship. The themes for worship help pupils to explore the Christian calendar. Reflection is encouraged and this has helped pupils to think about how they should help others both within and beyond the school, as well as focusing on personal attitudes and behaviour. The focus on spirituality since the previous denominational inspection, especially using prayer spaces, has had an impact upon the depth of prayer within worship. This is because the pupils have a much better understanding of different types of Christian prayers as well as practical experiences of it. A number of special events across the whole school year are marked by church and school jointly. Parents say that these are important in helping their children to understand the importance of belonging to their local and Christian community. The incumbent regularly leads worship in the Foundation Stage, thus developing good relationships with families as soon as they join the school. Pupils experience Anglican practice and liturgy well through, for example, saying the Lord's Prayer, using set responses and lighting a candle on their altar. There is some understanding of

God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit at an age-appropriate level across the school. Pupils, especially the worship council, are taking an increasing responsibility for monitoring worship and thinking through ways of improving opportunities and experiences for the whole school.

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

The headteacher and his school leaders have a clearly expressed vision for school improvement based on the school's Christian underpinning. Although this is a recently implemented vision, there is clear evidence that all members of the school community seek to live it out through the core Christian values of the school in day to day life. By nurturing the gifts of each pupil in line with a belief that each one is unique in God's sight, pupil outcomes are rapidly improving and individual needs are effectively addressed. For example, a number of parents of children who have special educational needs explained how these are met even when this is costly to the school, both financially and through the investment of time. There is a culture of growing accountability within the school, especially in relation to attainment and progress, thus enabling all pupils to come closer to fulfilling their full potential. Staff members receive strong personal and professional support which binds them closely as a team. They speak of school as 'not just a workplace' but as 'a place where we are accountable because we care'. Church school leadership is the particular and joint responsibility of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the leader for worship and RE, thus building Christian leaders within the school well. RE is well led and managed. As soon as the new headteacher identified issues with the RE curriculum, they were swiftly addressed and, as a result, improvements are evident and ongoing.

Governors have provided a high level of challenge to the school as it has been seeking to improve levels of achievement. However, they have not been so closely involved in monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school and neither have parents' views been sought. The issues for development from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed thoughtfully and with positive impact. Links with the church are strong. Examples of this include the incumbent's involvement with the worship council, services to mark the church's year and prayer spaces for the 'Thy Kingdom Come' national prayer initiative. The school's relationship with the Diocese is now good, in particular through the school improvement adviser and through the support of an interim board which is no longer needed. The community challenge project enables pupils to offer service within their locality to live out their values of responsibility and love in real ways to those who live around them. Mutually beneficial links with other local schools provide opportunities to see good practice in other church schools and so to enrich the experiences of staff and pupils. Statutory requirements for collective worship and RE are met. The school has already progressed quickly on its journey as a church school, with the capacity to continue to do so.

SIAMS report June 2018 St Luke's CE primary (VC), Tiptree, Essex CO5 0SU