

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Terling Church of England Primary School

New Road Terling Chelmsford CM3 2NP

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Chelmsford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Essex
Date of inspection	1 May 2018
Date of last inspection	June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided
Headteacher	Pamela Smart
Inspector's name and number	Gillian Holmes 849

#### School context

Terling school is a smaller than average-sized village primary with just 95 pupils. Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes. There is a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) but significantly less than average from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is a close working relationship between the school and the village church. The school has undergone significant upheaval over the past few years. Since the previous diocesan inspection the school has been led by four different headteachers and has had a number of other staff changes. The present headteacher has been in post for two years.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Terling as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values of honesty, trust, respect and friendship are both implicit and explicit in all areas of school life.
- The headteacher, ably supported by her governors, has a strong vision of Christian leadership.
- Collective worship plays an important role in developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and in their spiritual and moral development.
- There is a very effective partnership with the local church, the Diocese and the Notley family of schools.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop the religious education (RE) curriculum to ensure consistency of teaching across the school so that pupils of all abilities are fully engaged and challenged.
- Review how pupils record their learning in RE and how teachers respond with marking and feedback to support pupils' development.
- Continue to develop the reflection areas in classrooms and complete the planned outdoor reflective area.
- To further develop and enhance the worship programme involve pupils and parents in monitoring and evaluating collective worship.

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

There is a very positive Christian ethos that underpins the school's work and is effectively expressed through its core Christian values. The values of honesty, trust, respect and friendship are exemplified by the caring and supportive relationships between teachers, pupils, their families and the community. These values are linked expressly with biblical teaching. The school's policies and practice support the school's mission statement that it aims 'to create an inclusive family environment with strong Christian links to the church and community to enable children to leave as confident, responsible pupils, proud of themselves and their achievement'. Its core Christian values are both explicit and implicit and are referred to throughout the day not only in worship and RE but in all other activities. Biblical teaching and Christian values are well embedded in the life of the school. The values are woven into the themes of collective worship and underpin the behaviour code, resulting in pupil behaviour being good. The values, RE and worship contribute very well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils. Parents rightly praise the school's Christian distinctiveness and say that it gives their children 'a good foundation for life'. Attainment across the school is in-line with national expectations. Identification of underachievement in reading has been successfully addressed through a range of initiatives. Pupils make expected and in some cases accelerated progress in reading, writing and maths. In keeping with its Christian ethos SEND pupils or those who are at risk of underachieving are promptly identified and receive targeted interventions delivered by class teachers and well-trained support staff. This ensures that all pupils access the full curriculum. Pupils experiencing emotional difficulties are competently supported by the school's learning mentor. Pupils are confident at expressing their ideas and opinions as there is a culture of respect. There have been no exclusions and incidents of bullying are very rare but are dealt with swiftly and fairly in keeping with the school's Christian ethos. As an expression of its caring Christian ethos, pupils enjoy coming to school and so attendance is good. Pupils talk enthusiastically about RE and worship. Special days are arranged to support pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith and to promote understanding of diversity and difference. Pupils have undertaken work on Black History month, enjoyed a multi-faith day learning about different religions and cultures through stories and studied harvest around the world. The school's charitable giving and the links with the Dominican Republic benefit pupils in their understanding of local, national and global communities. As an expression of the caring Christian ethos, pupils organise a wide range of charitable events each year.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Pupils have a positive attitude to collective worship which plays an important role in the life of the school. This is confirmed by parents and governors. Prayerful and meaningful worship takes place with a focus on Christian values and biblical teaching which contributes significantly to the life of the school, to pupils' spiritual and moral development and the enhancement of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Worship is effectively planned by the headteacher and governor responsible for worship. The worship group of eight pupils lead class worship in the four class bases one day a week. They develop the theme given through stories and acting and write the prayers they use. Pupils enjoy participating in worship through questioning, singing and reading prayers. Older pupils begin and end worship by leading the responses. Pupils are encouraged to reflect through focusing on a lit candle and cross on the worship table. Reflection and prayer together support pupils' spiritual journey very well and are a clear reflection of the school's Christian ethos. Pupils talk positively about the importance of prayer as 'talking to God as you would a friend'. There are three opportunities for pupils to pray during the school day and the Lord's Prayer is used regularly in worship. This means that pupils know this important Christian prayer and recognise its significance for Christians. Prayers written by the pupils are affixed to the prayer wall as well as being used in the classroom and in collective worship. To extend opportunities for spiritual development each class has a reflection area. The school council have agreed plans to develop a reflective area in the outdoor environment. Through worship pupils have developed a confidence in explaining the events of Christmas and Easter and at present are learning about Pentecost. This indicates their good understanding of the Christian year and the importance of Jesus for Christians. They have a good understanding of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Biblical material is used in worship and pupils are encouraged to make the links with their school's Christian values. The school uses the church for services each term. All pupils take part in these services which are very well attended by parents. The church warden from the local church plays an effective role in teaching the pupils about Anglican practice and leads a weekly Explorer group. This group is very well attended by pupils and enhances pupils' biblical understanding through games, crafts and Bible stories. Governor monitoring is used well to identify areas for improvement and informs future planning. At present neither pupils nor parents are involved in monitoring activities.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

There have been a number of changes of RE subject leader since the previous denominational inspection. At present the headteacher is taking the subject leader role. In-house staff training and training by the Diocese has supported staff expertise. However, the headteacher is aware that staffing changes necessitate further training to ensure that all staff feel equipped and confident. Learners value and enjoy RE. The older pupils find learning about other faiths interesting as they are encouraged to compare what they learn with their knowledge of Christianity. RE is linked to the school values, supporting pupils' SMSC development very well. The school uses the Understanding Christianity programme well to deliver learning focused on Christianity. The Explore programme forms a basis for delivering work on other religions. The headteacher has rightly identified that the RE curriculum needs further development to provide pupils of varying abilities with greater challenge and further develop pupils' skills of enquiry, analysis, interpretation and evaluation. Embryonic plans are in place to bring about this development. Lessons provide opportunities for learners to discuss and share their ideas and opinions and everyone's views are valued, which supports greater understanding of diversity and difference. Staff assess pupil progress termly using the agreed criteria. Standards of attainment for the majority of pupils are in-line with their attainment in other subject areas. The majority of pupils make good progress and some make accelerated progress. Teaching in RE is satisfactory and sometimes better. Although lessons all have learning objectives that pupils understand, the objectives are not always referred to in teachers' marking. As a consequence pupils are often unclear how to improve. Governors fulfil their monitoring role but the headteacher has identified that more effective monitoring of RE is necessary to raise standards. Cathedral workshops and visitors to the school who practice different religions and come from different cultures all contribute to pupils' learning.

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

The school has experienced a significant number of staff changes since the previous denominational inspection. The outstanding commitment of the headteacher working, closely with her supportive governors, has impacted significantly upon every aspect of school life. To support school improvement the headteacher has worked closely with the Diocese, the Notley family of schools and the Teaching Alliance. This link has significantly improved teaching and learning through the sharing of expertise and effective monitoring of pupils' work. The headteacher and governors have ensured that all recently recruited staff are supportive of the school's Christian ethos. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked effectively to demonstrate the school's vision and Christian values to pupils, parents and the local community. As a consequence the school is a welcoming, caring, inclusive and celebratory place. The school has partially addressed the areas for improvement from the previous denominational inspection. For example, governors now take a greater role in evaluating Terling's effectiveness as a church school. They do this by confidently fulfilling their role as strategic partners with the headteacher in school improvement. Considerable work has been carried out to enhance the school's outside environment and advanced plans are in place to create a reflection garden. Arrangements for RE and worship meet statutory requirements and are now being more effectively led by the headteacher. School has close and supportive links with the church. There is currently a clergy vacancy at the church. During this time the church warden has maintained strong links. She is involved fully in school life both as governor with responsibility for RE and worship and by leading worship one day each week. Parents are actively involved in the school's life and its Christian foundation through regular invitations to events and the informative website. Information sharing, communication and involvement of parents and the community is evident through the school's newsletter. Parents praise the school for its 'open door' policy and the excellent relationships between staff and parents. A half-termly parent forum, curriculum workshops and parental surveys enable them to understand and support their children effectively. The very active parent association raises money for the school and supports its links with the church and the community. The school is the centre of the community taking part in village activities such as the village fete, horticultural show and the 'duck' race.