

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Cedd's Church of England Primary School

East End Road Bradwell-On –Sea Essex CMO 7PY

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chelmsford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	June 2014
Name of multi-academy trust	The Chelmsford Schools Vine Trust
Date of inspection	26 April 2018
Date of last inspection	November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 140844
Headteacher / Head of School	Pauline Ward/Lyndsey Wood
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Currently there are 133 pupils on roll who come from a variety of faith backgrounds and none. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and /or disabilities is below the national average. In June 2014, the school became an academy as part of The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust. It is part of a hub which includes Southminster School, also on the Dengie Peninsula. The executive headteacher works across two schools, with a full time head of school at St Cedd's. The executive headteacher also works alongside a new subject leader for religious education [RE].

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

- The partnership with the churches enriches the worshipping life of this school for pupils and adults.
- The religious literacy of pupils supports their learning about the Christian faith and their own spiritual journeys very well.
- Strong and seamless leadership and good governance ensures the needs of pupils and their families are nurtured. Consequently, pupils are successful in this Christian family environment which supports their academic, personal and spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Extend the monitoring of RE and collective worship by the governors to support the RE subject leader in her role and to inform leaders and governors of these two key aspects of Christian distinctiveness.
- Embed the assessment of RE to inform planning and ensure pupils engage with 'big questions' to deepen their own thinking.
- Enable staff to deepen their knowledge and understanding of key Christian beliefs so they become more confident in teaching RE.

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

St Cedd's School values every person. It lives out its firm belief that inspiring teaching, nurturing academic excellence and Christian character as well as unlocking potential enables pupils to learn, grow and flourish. This is because achieving, believing and caring are rooted in core Christian values, such as forgiveness. Consequently, relationships and behaviour are very good. Pupils say they trust their teachers and find them approachable. Parents testify to always being able to tell a St Cedd's pupil out of school as they are polite and always have impeccable manners. High expectations encourage pupils to persevere, set their own targets and achieve well, both academically and personally. This results in good attainment and progress which is above average. All achievement is valued, with subjects such as music enriching learning. All pupils are supported to attend residential visits, which makes a huge impact on their subsequent reading and writing. The school attributes this to pupils thinking of themselves as positive learners. All this takes place within a strong Christian community. In September 2016 St Cedd's revisited the school's core values. This resulted in biblical quotations displayed in prominent places around the school, linking values to key verses in the Bible. Due to the generosity of the Buckeridge award, Reception pupils are given a Bible which they can use in school and then take with them when they leave.

Worship and RE make good contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] and personal development and to the Christian character of the school. Good use of the forest school and the spiritual garden enable pupils to reflect on the wonder of God's creation in their part of the world. RE has a high profile and uses the 'Understanding Christianity' resource as well as other approaches in teaching and learning, such as 'What if? Learning'. Pupils meet people of all faiths and none, both by visiting their places of worship, such as a synagogue, and by inviting people of faith into school. For example, clergy are welcome and regular visitors to school and pupils recently enjoyed a Hindu workshop.

Whilst this school is in a rural context, pupils explore Christianity as a worldwide faith, especially through the link St Cedd's has with China and its support for a school there. This nurtures pupils' global awareness well. In addition, the school engages in fundraising for many charities, such as Water Aid. Pupils respond in service and in generosity as an expression of their Christian ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is inspirational and inclusive and an important part of school life at St Cedd's. It is varied in its approach and has an emphasis on key festivals in the church year and biblical teaching. There are close links with nearby St Thomas's Church as well as St Peter's Chapel in Bradwell. The pattern of worship includes church services for Candlemas, Lent, Plough Sunday and an open air Pentecost service. Pupils are encouraged to pray and reflect as well as lead an annual pilgrimage to St Peter's Chapel. This nurtures their spiritual development very well. Parents too are welcomed and always invited to attend, which they greatly value. The pupil worship team lead worship, often with role play to illustrate important Christian values, such as friendship and forgiveness. Such values are linked to the lives of the apostles and how they inspire us to 'be our best selves'. Anglican forms of worship are well used. These include sharing a form of the peace and lighting a candle as a reminder that 'Jesus is the light of the world, a light no darkness can quench.' Many pupils use the prayer tents in classes if they 'want to be quiet, talk to God and read the Bible'. The rector leads worship in school every week, which pupils and parents alike value. For example, pupils say they have been helped to 'learn and know The Lord's Prayer off by heart'. They go on to say, 'we get to say the long version with trespasses', which they know is about how they should forgive others. One pupil volunteered, 'Christians learn from each other, even in different parts of the world. They don't all feel the same about Christianity'. Pupil perceptions are gathered on why Christians pray. At St Cedd's they are creative in prayer which can include African drumming.

Pupils have a good understanding of the Christian belief of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For example, they explain, 'The Holy Trinity is made up of three people' and speak of The Holy Spirit in 'the shape of a dove'. They speak of incarnation as, 'God in human form'. The school attributes this to the weekly visit of the rector who helps pupils to understand this key Christian belief. Consequently, some Year 5 and 6 pupils are exploring confirmation classes.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

A variety of approaches to teaching and learning in RE are used, such as 'Understanding Christianity' and 'What If? learning'. This encourages pupils and their teachers to see things differently. Pupils say that RE lessons excite and engage them. They find RE fascinating and are inspired by it. They say they like the fact that the teachers 'let us have our own opinions and talk about it'. Certainly, their level of knowledge and understanding is very good. This is because Key Stage 2 teachers enable pupils to, 'scroll down and find the Bible references', using key vocabulary, such as 'crucified' and 'inference', predicting what happens next. Year 6 pupils are especially invited to dig deeper, resulting in higher standards than previous years. In addition, assertive mentoring is used, as in other subjects. As a result, progress and achievement in RE is good, compared to other core subjects. For example, pupils ask questions, such as, 'Why do Christians believe in Christmas?' and 'What does incarnation mean?' Pupils know how to improve in their work and even the youngest pupils use 'clouds with a challenge on'. Welcome visitors to RE lessons include their rector who helps them 'how to use a Bible and how to find the New Testament in the Bible'. Their explanation of a key Christian belief, such as salvation, is impressive. For example, older pupils say, 'salvation is where we are saved from our sins by Jesus because He died on the cross for us and He didn't try and escape from His death'. A Year 6 pupil went on to say, 'Jesus sacrificed Himself for our sins by dying on the cross so we could be with Him in heaven. We know that He proved to be the Son of God by dying on the cross and fulfilling prophecy'.

Whilst such knowledge is very good, the school leaders and the RE subject leader acknowledge that the assessment of RE needs to be embedded, which includes the monitoring of this key subject. The RE subject leader is new in post but has already identified that staff need to build up confidence in teaching RE. She is well aware that, for RE to take centre stage, skills need to be transferred to other subjects. For example, using 'Understanding Christianity' and 'What if? Learning' approaches to see things differently and so become more embedded in their thinking and planning.

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

St Cedd's has recently adopted John 10 v 10 as its new Christian vision across both schools so that, together 'we achieve, believe, care by being deeply Christian, serving the common good'. Valuing all God's children drives the whole of The Vine Trust, with its emphasis on the whole child. This nurtures the academic, personal and spiritual development of all groups of pupils very well. Areas from the previous inspection have been appropriately addressed and the school has clear priorities for action, going forward as a member of the trust. The clergy of both parishes of St Cedd's and Southminster are very much part of the planning processes at governor and trustee level. St Thomas' Church runs a pop up café for young mothers and their toddlers. St Cedd's offers a culture which is inclusive and welcoming to all parents. For example, one parent coming from a family of atheists spoke of how they love this school and were desperate for their children to attend. Another parent praised the way St Cedd's teaches 'traditional values and they learn about other religions too'. Pupils take their learning home and live their Christian values out. For example, one parent commented on how her daughter said, 'Mummy, this is perseverance', demonstrating what it meant to her.

The headteacher attends training and feedbacks to staff and governors. Links with the diocese are supportive and links with schools within the Vine partnership are positive, sharing expertise and experiences. Staff are supported in their professional development, with senior leaders growing in confidence in key aspects of their work, such as leading collective worship. Whilst RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements, the school's leaders and governors recognise the importance of embedding the monitoring of RE and collective worship as two key aspects of Christian distinctiveness.

Community links are strong, with the school taking part in village events, such as the annual flower show, singing for elderly residents and their involvement in the Christmas fair. Staff confirm that St Cedd's is 'home from home' and praise the community atmosphere where everyone comes together. This is testament to the 'genuine friendly, meaningful and fulfilling' Christian ethos which exists.