



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Holy Trinity Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Beridge Road, Halstead, Essex, CO9 1JH

**Previous SIAS grade: Satisfactory**

**Current SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: Chelmsford**

Local authority: Essex

Date of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Date of last inspection: November 2011

School's unique reference number: 115066

Headteacher: Jonathan Smith

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

#### School context

Holy Trinity is a small Voluntary Controlled Primary School. The number on roll has increased. Its growing popularity is due to significant improvements in standards and progress since the previous denominational inspection (2011). During this intervening period, the church was without an incumbent for some time. The current vicar took up post in November 2015. Pupils are mainly White British. A very small proportion of families attend church regularly outside of their involvement through school. The proportion of pupils with some sort of special educational need and/or who are socially disadvantaged is above the national and local authority averages.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity Halstead school as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher is providing strong and collaborative leadership based on the imperative to improve attainment and progress and on the school's reviewed Christian vision, mission and values.
- The school is a caring and welcoming place with a strong sense of belonging and community. Positive relationships and exemplary behaviour express its supportive and inclusive Christian underpinning well.
- In keeping with the school's Christian ethos pupils are known well and are treated as individuals. This makes a good contribution to their personal development and wellbeing.

#### Areas to improve

- Progress Church links given the fresh impetus provided by the appointment of the new vicar.
- Develop reflection areas around the school to be used for prayer in order to increase pupils' spirituality and the Christian foundation of the school's life and work.
- Develop an understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith, and of Anglicanism throughout the world, in order to improve pupils' religious understanding and cultural development.

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

The school's vision, mission and values, reviewed since the previous denominational inspection, draw their inspiration from its Christian foundation. Consequently, the school is working effectively to secure pupils' wellbeing and personal development as well as their academic attainment and progress. As a parent reflected on her child's progress, 'The opportunities (both academically and socially) given and how my child has responded is just amazing.' The values of thankfulness, forgiveness, endurance, compassion/empathy, trust, friendship, justice and respect have a higher profile within school life than previously. Although the values are well known, pupils cannot consistently explain their specific links to Christian beliefs and teaching. The school takes into consideration the varying needs of pupils very effectively. Consequently, it is working well to support pupils of all ability levels in making at least good progress, both academically and personally. This leads to pupils now achieving above the national and local authority averages. Reflecting its commitment to Christian service, the school has a clear vision for its place within the local community. The school is an inclusive and happy institution which seeks to live out its mission statement which appropriately focuses on living in the way that is expected by Jesus. Attendance is high, relationships are strong and behaviour is exemplary. The school expresses its Christian care in a number of ways including, for example, by its focus on the individual and their families. Intervention and support is targeted at those with long or short term needs as well as through whole school involvement in charitable fund raising. Its behaviour and anti-bullying policies are clearly based on the school's code, which is underpinned by Christian values. These are consistently applied and support pupils' wellbeing. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and increasingly linked well to the school's Christian ethos and values. Extra curricular opportunities, pupils taking responsibility for themselves and others, religious education (RE) and worship support pupils' personal development well. The fairly recently introduced 'Growth mindset' approaches are also impacting positively on both attainment and personal wellbeing. Pupils respond well in RE lessons. They are increasingly able to express their own thoughts confidently and clearly and to listen respectfully to those of others. They have a growing understanding of Christianity and of other world faiths, addressed as part of the RE curriculum. Pupils see the relevance of RE in helping them to understand both themselves and other people. However, the multi-cultural nature of Christianity, and of Anglicanism in particular, is not sufficiently explored.

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

The worship programme has improved since the previous denominational inspection. Its importance in expressing the school's Christian values and supporting pupils' spiritual, moral and religious development is well focused. Through worship, supported by RE, pupils have a good, age-appropriate understanding of the central place of Jesus for Christians. Understanding of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is developing. Pupils engage well with a range of biblical stories and ideas which supports their understanding of Christian belief and practice. The daily programme is enhanced by involvement from Church members, both lay and clerical, who lead weekly acts of worship in school. Pupils have a developing understanding of the Christian year as well as some aspects of Anglican worship styles and practices. This includes saying the Lord's Prayer and using opening and closing sentences with responses during worship twice weekly. Prayers are said each day, many of which have been written by pupils themselves. The youngest pupils say a prayer before their snack time and at the end of the day. Prayer and reflection contributes well to pupils' spiritual development. However, opportunities across the school through, for example, the use of prayer boxes and reflection areas are missed. Planning is increasingly effective in focusing on the school's Christian values and involves adults and pupils appropriately. An evaluation system has been put in place since the previous denominational inspection which involves pupils and adults in reflecting on the impact of worship within the community. Improvement points have been taken on board from this evaluation. Pupils rightly recognise the strong community feel of worship, 'It makes you feel part of things and think about God' as one younger pupil said. Behaviour is excellent during worship. Pupils show enjoyment, they listen attentively and join in with singing enthusiastically. This reflects the importance given to worship by the school community. Worship also provides opportunities to celebrate each other's achievements and to recognise each other's gifts and talents. This is a clear reflection of the school's underpinning Christian and inclusive ethos. A worship focal point in the hall includes a cross and a candle and pupils are able to explain the significance of these items for Christians. Whilst being explicitly Christian

in nature, worship is inclusive of those of other faiths and of none. For example, pupils are given the option to join in with prayer or to listen respectfully if they feel they cannot or do not want to pray. Occasionally, stories from other faith traditions are appropriately included as part of the worship programme but it predominately focuses on biblical material. Developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of, and reflection on, Bible stories is a clear development point that was identified by adults and pupils. This is now being addressed well through worship.

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

Since the previous denominational inspection, the headteacher has worked effectively with his senior and middle leaders to improve standards across the school. His vision, shared by colleagues, is based on the school's Christian foundation. Issues from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed appropriately. Parents support the inclusive nature of the school's values. They appreciate the staff's care and concern for their children as individuals. They see this as part of the way in which the school expresses its Christian ethos. Senior leaders, including governors, have insight into school performance which is monitored regularly. Governors are kept informed of the developments with regard to the school's Christian ethos but it is not regularly discussed during governing body meetings. However, governors are active in the school and are appropriately involved in monitoring worship and the RE programme. Action planning for further improving the Christian distinctiveness of the school is not sufficiently developed. During a period of interregnum, lay members kept an appropriate link with the church in place. The school and parish are now working increasingly well together through the fresh impetus provided by the new incumbent. For example, an Easter service in church was held which parents and pupils really appreciated. The vicar is already a valued presence in the school and ways of increasing the partnership have been discussed. Basic links with the Local Authority and Diocese support school development through, for example, staff and governor training opportunities. Staff work together in a collegiate manner, which supports them in developing professionally whilst working within a church school. RE and worship meet statutory requirements. The current scheme of work for RE is being updated to fully reflect the requirements of the new Essex Agreed Syllabus. Parents are well informed about their children's education. They are very appreciative of the school's approachability, inclusiveness and care. This is recognised by them as clearly being part of the school's Christian ethos.

Holy Trinity Halstead CE (VC) Primary School, Beridge Road, Halstead, Essex, CO9 1JH