

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,

Wigley Bush Lane,
South Weald,
Brentwood, Essex
CM14 5QN

Diocese: Chelmsford

LEA: Essex

Dates of inspection: 23rd September 2009

Date of last inspection: 14th – 15th September 2006

School's Unique reference number: 115164

Name of Headteacher: Mr Iain Gunn

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number: Mrs Rosemary Morgan (64)

School context

St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School has 315 pupils on roll. A larger than average primary school, it is consistently over-subscribed. Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds with a few pupils from ethnic minority groups. The majority of children start school with standards that are above average expectations. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is lower than average. The school has very close links with St Peter's Church and also with the local and wider community.

The school's distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter's as a Church of England School are outstanding.

The Headteacher, staff and Governors promote a distinctive Christian vision which is implemented effectively in all aspects of school life.

Established Strengths

- The outstanding Christian ethos in which all learners are encouraged, valued and challenged to reach their full potential.
- The excellent, imaginative leadership from the headteacher (supported by the senior team and governors) which has created a culture of continuous improvement.
- The co-ordination of RE (Religious Education) and collective worship which impacts with great success on pupils lives.
- Excellent links with St Peter's Church and the local and wider community which are used with exceptional effect to strengthen the school's ethos and contribute greatly to the pupils' spiritual development.
- The valuable contribution that collective worship makes to the life of the school.

Focus for Development

- To continue to develop the school as a spiritual community, a priority which is already identified within the School Improvement Plan.

The School through its distinctive Christian character is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners.

A supportive welcoming Christian family community has been created through the determined, commitment of all staff and governors. Endeavour and effort is noticed and celebrated through praise and recognition in assembly and feedback; pupils and staff feel valued and their contributions appreciated. Gospel Values are seen in action through the strength and quality of relationships, one pupil stating that the school "gives me a warm feeling because we are all linked together." Pupils and parents speak with enthusiasm of the success of "playtime monitors" and the junior/infant reading partnership scheme. Members of the school council displayed a mature understanding of their role in initiating improvements such as the introduction of lockers, the adventure play area and of the charity nominations for whole school support. The quality environment, enhanced by worship-centred displays, other faith displays and by a range of multi-cultural artefacts, enables pupils to learn, to wonder and to acquire a high level of understanding relevant for life within the context of the wider community.

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The impact of collective worship is outstanding.

Central to the life of the school the impact of collective worship is outstanding. It is well planned, the headteacher and incumbent working in close co-operation to create a termly plan for worship which reflects both the church year, relevant topics and community issues such as 'Fair Trade'. Shared school and church services take place regularly at St Peter's Church and there are many opportunities for pupils and staff to participate and contribute. A very good example of this was when the school and church choirs sang an anthem at the Patronal Festival written by the deputy head. Prayer is of great importance to pupils, taking place within classes, within collective worship and led by the Incumbent in response to class requests. A child talked of prayer as "sharing a worry" and of the role of the prayer support group. One act of worship focussed on the theme of "Unconditional love"; pupils were responsive, respectful and keen to contribute their thoughts. After the Lord's Prayer was sung there followed a bible reading and a prayer. The ensuing quietness was powerful. Pupils enjoy worship and are encouraged to evaluate it. The impact of worship is seen in positive responses to questionnaires and through the fact that pupils are keen to share their learning. This was demonstrated well by a pupil speaking with understanding about the themes of self-control and forgiveness.

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The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious education is valued as a subject and co-ordination is thorough, effective and challenges pupils to achieve high standards. Comprehensive assessment, formative through success criteria, and summative, ensures pupils reach their potential. A new scheme of work has been planned, the co-ordinator, incumbent and head working in close co-operation to produce material tailored to meet the needs of pupils as future citizens. In one lesson Year 2 pupils were discussing and writing prayers on a theme of harvest and sharing. In a Year 3 and 4 lessons pupils could explain their reasons for supporting Fair Trade products. A Year 5/6 lesson focused on the relevance of the Ten Commandments today; powerful group discussions showed strong collaboration and great maturity of thought. Pupils talked with animation about RE lessons, referring to the importance of learning about other faiths.

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The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a Church School is outstanding.

The headteacher has a clear, strong vision founded in Gospel Values which he communicates with great effect to all groups. He is supported in this by a very effective senior team and by able governors who recognise the role they play in putting the vision into practice. The highly productive relationship between church and school, nurtured by the dedicated and supportive incumbent, is pivotal to the school's distinctiveness. Self-evaluation is used confidently as a tool to monitor progress and to inform a culture of continuous improvement. An annual development day involves staff, governors and pupil representatives, and the views of stakeholders are regularly sought to inform the development process. The headteacher has created an ethos of welcome, care and celebration of the individual. The sense of Christian community is powerful with staff, parents and pupils talking with pride of their role within it.

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September 2009 St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, South Weald CM14 5QN