



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Alphege Voluntary Controlled Church of England Infant School

Oxford Road

Whitstable

Kent

CT5 1DA

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 29th January 2015

Date of last inspection: 28th January 2010

School's unique reference number: 118659

Headteacher: Steph Guthrie

Inspector's name and number: Matthew Crick 758

School context

St Alphege Church of England Voluntary Controlled Church of England Infant School is a two form entry school with 177 pupils on roll drawn from the centre of Whitstable and surrounding residential areas. The school includes a Local Authority maintained nursery. Pupils' attainment on entry is below those expected for their age. At Key Stage 1 standards are better than national averages overall. In July 2013 OFSTED judged the school to be good with outstanding for behaviour and [sSafety](#). The current Headteacher took up her role in September 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Alphege CE Infant School as a Church of England school are good

- The school has a strong sense of community which means that pupils and parents have a secure sense of belonging.
- Worship provides pupils with good opportunities to reflect through participation and the provision of varied approaches to prayer.
- The appointment of a new Headteacher has resulted in the raising of the profile of RE and collective worship.
- The close relationship between all senior leaders provides inspiring leadership that ensures the school works effectively with a wide range of education and community partners.

Areas to improve

- Complete the process for the adoption of the set of distinctive Christian values for the school.
- Develop pupils' involvement in the planning, delivering and monitoring of worship.
- Develop outdoor spaces that actively promote and enable spiritual reflection of Christian values.
- Ensure pupils [fully](#) understand the Biblical basis for the school's Christian values and [the](#) charitable activities they undertake.

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

The impact of the school's dedication to promoting a strong sense of community within its implicit Christian ethos pervades the school. Consequently parents speak about a strong sense of stability and feel they are warmly welcomed into the school. Through a wide range of programmes the school offers effective support to families which enhances pupils' confidence and sense of security. On entry to the school pupils are below national expectations overall. By the end of Key Stage 1 they exceed or match expected levels. This strong progress is underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. The pupils' spiritual development is securely enhanced by the provision of a variety of opportunities for prayer and reflection inside the school. The prayer areas in each class, developed since the last inspection, are well utilised by pupils. This represents improvement since the last inspection. The school has a carefully thought through strategy to introduce and develop its key Christian values to pupils and parents. The current focus on Koinonia [the concept of community, communion and sharing] is clearly evident to parents. The concept is well articulated by pupils' 'Coming together as a family,' is a strength of the school because the pupils perceive this in the context of the school's Christian character. Pupils take part in fundraising events for local charities including the food bank. However, their understanding of the Christian motivation for such actions is at an early stage. Pupils enjoy exceptionally good relationships with each other and adults, showing respect for other faiths and cultures as well as their own. This stems from the open and inclusive nature of the school as well as learning in Religious Education (RE). Godly Play has been used to extend pupils' and adults' understanding of Christian practices and beliefs, while encouraging sustained reflective thought. Pupils have a clear understanding of the significance of Christian symbols that are used effectively through out the school The outdoor environment does not currently offer the same inviting opportunities to pause and reflect.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

There is a well thought out strategy and structured plan for worship which makes a strong contribution to the life of the school. Since the last inspection the school has written and introduced a school prayer. More call and response prayers have been incorporated into worship. Times for stillness and reflection are now established elements of worship. Since the start of the current academic year, Diocesan worship resources have been incorporated into existing worship plans. Consequently pupils have a developing sense of the importance of Jesus in Christianity. Pupils have a secure knowledge of the significance of the use of colours to mark the Church year in prayer areas and displays. They confidently link key festivals to the appropriate liturgical colour. Pupils' secure understanding of Koinonia is a result of the effective way it has been explored and explained in worship. Worship is valued by pupils who enjoy the chance to act and 'see everyone together'. A high level of engagement is achieved in acts of whole-school worship because pupils are given a number of different ways to participate. The school makes frequent use of the church. This has played a clear role in developing pupils' secure understanding of it as a place of worship. It has also deepened their understanding of Anglican traditions and practices. Through the use of real life examples the school sensitively develops an age-appropriate understanding of the Trinity. The incumbent is closely involved in the planning and leading of worship. She has used her links with other clergy to ensure the school benefits from a range of visitors. Pupils speak confidently about their involvement in worship because they are involved in planning class worship and help their class teachers when they lead whole-school worship. Although monitoring of worship has led to improvement the degree of involvement does not formally and fully include all stakeholders. While parents do not attend class-led worship in school, worship in the Church is well supported and keenly anticipated. The 'Easter Experience', run by the church impacted on the school community in a profound way.

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

Since the appointment of a new Headteacher in September 2014 the Christian character of the school has developed rapidly. By re-assigning subject leadership, the Headteacher has raised the profile of RE and collective worship. This has enabled the subject leader to focus more on enhancing the school's distinctive Christian character. The school's leaders have a firm understanding of how well pupils are performing. This is a result of effective monitoring, consistent moderation and proactive engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders. Both senior and middle leaders act promptly to ensure consistency in delivery so that all pupils benefit equally. As a result achievement has risen, thus improving the opportunities for all pupils to succeed in the future. Robust plans have been put in place to secure and share a newly developed/extended Christian vision for the school. The school has not yet updated key policies, documents and media to reflect the changes implemented so far. Understanding of the school's new/renewed key Christian values still needs to be securely embedded for all stakeholders.

The school has been proactive in establishing links with other local and Church schools and Canterbury Christ Church University to continue its drive to raise standards. This has been achieved through the sharing of good practice and action research. The school and Church enjoy a strong and mutually beneficial relationship. Resources and expertise are creatively shared in a way that parents see a clear benefit to their families and the wider community. The school building is used for mother and toddler sessions, the Beanstalk reading workshops and sensory story telling. These activities have been developed to meet the needs of the community in which the school is situated. Governors play an active role in all aspects of school life. Through their involvement in the Strategic Plan governors support the development of the school's Christian ethos. However, opportunities to articulate the school's Christian ethos are not fully utilised. Arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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