

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Churchgate Church Of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Old Harlow  
Essex  
CM17 0LB

**Diocese:** Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex  
Date of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008  
Date of last inspection: 28/29 January 2004  
School's unique reference number: 115170  
Headteacher: Mrs Linda Turnbull  
Inspector's name and number: Andrew Binnell

#### School context

Churchgate Church Of England Voluntary Aided Primary School serves the community of Old Harlow. Most pupils are White British, with a high proportion having statements for their special educational needs.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Churchgate as a Church of England school is good.**

The Headteacher and Incumbent, well supported by the staff team and the Governing Body, provide extremely effective leadership of this church school. Pupils at this school are cherished as individuals within their school community. The school has responded in a highly effective way to the areas for development identified in the last inspection of this type in January 2004.

#### Established Strengths

- Care, guidance and support of pupils is outstanding
- The school environment created to support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners
- Strengthened links between the school and the church community

#### Focus for development

- To utilise aspects of effective classroom practice, as appropriate, to enhance collective worship
- To reflect as a community on further opportunities to worship as a school in the parish church
- To continue to develop the Religious Education curriculum through effective resourcing and ongoing evaluation.

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

Learners from all groups feel valued and special in this inclusive school environment. The school achieves the key priority outlined in the Mission Statement to 'provide a high quality Christian based education for primary school children living in the community of Old Harlow.' The commitment to Christian values is shared by the Headteacher, all staff and members of the Governing Body. Pupils show respect and consideration for each other, with older pupils supporting younger ones both in the playground and in and around the school. One pupil stated: 'We are like a huge family, we all play and get along really well.' Their spiritual, moral and social, and increasingly cultural development is outstanding. The school environment successfully supports pupil development in all of these areas. Pupils have excellent behaviour and positive attitudes.

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

School worship is good. It is central to all aspects of school life. It is now well planned and reflects Christian celebrations over the course of the school year. Very good progress has been made in responding to areas for development identified at the last inspection. Themes are well thought out for each term and there is evidence of effective liaison between the school and the Incumbent. Music now plays a central role in worship. Pupils, for example, at the assembly attended by the Inspector, sang with great enthusiasm and energy. Prayers are now used in a sensitive way to enhance school worship. Pupils experience a good variety of worship over the course of the school week, with each assembly having a different focus. They particularly enjoy collective worship at the start and end of the school week. These are both acts of worship which include a high level of pupil participation.

The parish church is used to support school worship and as a resource to support learning. A range of school worship takes place in the church. This includes Harvest Festival, and services to reflect the festivals of Christmas and Easter.

Though there is much to celebrate about the place of collective worship in the school, it is recommended that the school utilises aspects of effective classroom practice, as appropriate, to enhance school worship. Examples of this would include a focus for pupils as they enter the hall, a brief explanation of the theme for the assembly as the outset, and opportunities at every possibility for pupil participation in their worship. It is also suggested that the school formalises its approach to the place of evaluation of collective worship. Pupils', staff and Governors' should be given the opportunity on a regular basis to evaluate the content of worship experienced, enabling future plans to reflect some of these findings.

It is also recommended that the school as a community reflects on further opportunities to worship as a school in the parish church. Opportunities could include participation in an Education Sunday service in church, and the development of a whole school Eucharist.

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

Religious Education is recognised as being of key importance in the school. Pupils' attitudes are positive and the quality of teaching is good. There is a clear policy and a new scheme of work is in place following a recent review. This review is taking place in all schools within the Diocese of Chelmsford, reflecting their new curriculum that has been developed. The Subject leader is highly valued by the school and she is providing effective support to the staff team to ensure that the new curriculum 'beds in' appropriately. The school needs to purchase additional resources to support the teaching of these revised materials and evaluate their impact on teaching and learning over the course of this first year of implementation and beyond.

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

The Headteacher provides very good leadership which is recognised by all members of the community. She is enthusiastically supported by the Incumbent, who is popular and well respected within the school. They work closely together and, with the support of the staff team and Governors, have successfully enhanced the Christian dimension of the school and strengthened links between the school and church. The School Council is an effective body, with pupils having confidence in their teachers, and knowing that their opinions are valued. The 'vox pop' sessions are an effective extension of the pupil voice and are highlighted as an example of good practice. The Governors share the Headteacher's vision for the school and are both supportive of her and challenging when the need arises.

The school is now in a position to continue the good progress made since the last inspection.