

# National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

## **William Ford Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School**

Ford Road  
Dagenham  
RM10 9JS

### **Diocese: Chelmsford**

LA: Barking and Dagenham

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006

Date of last inspection: October 2001

School's Unique reference number: 101234

Headteacher: Mrs Mandy Short

Inspector: Mrs Jean Brown

### **School context**

William Ford School is situated in Dagenham, in an area of social deprivation. Most families are not home owners. The school occupies a large site shared with the community infant school. It has a large playground and two fields, one of which is rented from the nearby secondary school. The school moved to the current site in 1974. There is an on-going programme of building work to increase classroom sizes, and a new sports hall, shared with the infant school and to be used by the local community, was opened last year. There are currently 334 children on roll with an increasing number from minority ethnic backgrounds.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of William Ford Junior as a Church of England school is outstanding.**

The children, many of whom come from socially and culturally deprived homes, are given a wealth of opportunities and make excellent progress within a secure Christian community.

**1**

### **Established strengths**

- The Christian ethos of the school, which clearly underpins all aspects of school life.
- The excellent behaviour and high achievement of all pupils.
- The leadership of the senior management team in supporting, encouraging and enabling the staff

### **Focus for development**

- To continue to work with parents, enabling them to appreciate the special ethos of William Ford School as a church school.
- To increase pupils' awareness of being part of the diocese of Chelmsford and the wider Anglican community.

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

There is a strong awareness of the uniqueness and importance of each individual. The school is inclusive and learners, including those with special needs, feel secure in the well ordered environment; for many pupils the school is the only stable element in their lives. Attendance rates are high, children enjoy coming to school and are proud of their achievements. Members of staff, who form a strong collaborative team, are excellent role models for the children and all are treated with respect and courtesy. RE and collective worship particularly contribute to pupils' spiritual development. The school makes its Christian status clear by attractive displays and exhibits, texts chosen by the children which are in each room, and various symbols which do not dominate, but are clearly an integral part of the school. Children are given responsibility, such as being 'playground buddies' and members of school council. The council is influential, for example they suggested that healthy snacks

1

should be sold at break times and they choose the charities which are supported by the school. There is a good range of clubs, including 'Bible explorers' and children are given cultural opportunities, for example, learning a musical instrument and working with the Royal ballet.

1

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.**

Children enjoy Christian worship which is well planned, both in the long and short term, and is of consistently good quality. There is a clear focus to each act of worship and children describe being given 'something to remember' which is subsequently discussed by pupils in the classroom. An atmosphere of calm is created in the school hall by the use of quiet music and symbols such as a simple cross and candles, emphasising that assembly is a special time. Pupils are extremely attentive and responsive, and enjoy coming together as a community at the end of the day. They join in known prayers and use times of reflection appropriately. Hymns and songs are taught with careful consideration given to the meaning of the words and they are sung with great enthusiasm. Children are given opportunities to prepare and lead worship, for example, a recent assembly had been led by a group of older pupils on African culture. They particularly appreciate the visitors from local churches who contribute each week. ICT is used increasingly to very good effect. Children of other faiths are happy to participate in worship, in the knowledge that their beliefs are respected by all. Christian festivals are given high profile. Worship is attended and led by all staff, and governors are often present.

Worship is regularly evaluated by staff and children's opinions are sought through the school council.

1

**Religious Education is given high status in the curriculum and its effectiveness is outstanding.**

The co-ordinator, who has excellent subject knowledge and great enthusiasm, has developed a comprehensive scheme of work based on the borough syllabus which enables staff to deliver thought provoking lessons of exceptionally good quality. This is currently being reviewed. In the lessons observed a variety of teaching methods, such as talking with a partner, were used to ensure that pupils were fully engaged, using their own life experiences. The subject is well resourced and ICT is used very effectively to enhance learning. Standards are high; marking of RE is positive, praising success and posing questions to extend pupils' thinking. A comment on achievement in RE is made on the annual report to parents and the co-ordinator is currently revising assessment procedures. There is a governor with responsibility for RE and teaching and learning is monitored within each year group. Appropriate visits are incorporated into the curriculum – these could well be extended to include Chelmsford Cathedral as this would increase the children's understanding of the structure and breadth of the Anglican church.

1

**The leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding.**

It is clear from symbols, artefacts and displays that William Ford is a Christian community, but not in a way that would prevent parents, most of whom do not have a church background, from feeling comfortable. It is now made more evident in the letter that is sent to new parents that the school is a Christian community, but the headteacher is aware that more work needs to be done in this area ensuring that parents understand the distinctiveness of a church school and its values. Children have a good understanding of the Church foundation and can explain the symbols on their badge. The Governors, many of whom are church members, and the senior leadership team share and promote a clear vision and have discussed the character of a church school. There is a close relationship between the church and the school; clergy visit regularly supporting a range of events. The vicar is a governor and has a strong pastoral role with staff and parents. He meets regularly with the leadership team to discuss RE and worship. The church remembers the school in prayer. Many

of the staff are practising Christians and all Governors are strongly supportive of the ethos of the school. A good number of parents attend special services, such as Easter and Christmas, which now have to be held in school as the church is small. The parish church is used as a curriculum resource. RE and Collective worship feature on the school improvement plan.

**1**

November 2006 William Ford Junior School, Ford Road, Dagenham. RM 10 9JS