



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School

Beardsley Drive  
Springfield  
Chelmsford  
CMI 6ZQ

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: The Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood**

Local authority: Essex

Date of inspection: 19 January 2016

Date of last inspection: February 2011

School's unique reference number: 115204

Headteacher: Greg Waters

Inspectors' name and number: Lizzie McWhirter 244 and Pam Brannigan

#### School context

This joint Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School is a two form entry school, serving the parish of St Augustine's in North Springfield. There are 419 pupils on roll, 20% of whom are Roman Catholic and 26% of whom are Church of England pupils. Other pupils come from other Christian backgrounds, or non-faith, Muslim or Hindu families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average. Since the previous inspection, there is a new Roman Catholic priest and two new religious education [RE] subject leaders in post.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Bishops' School as a Church of England school are good

- The unswerving and dedicated Christian leadership at all levels ensures the Christian character of this joint school permeates all its life.
- This inclusive Christian family community is welcoming to all, whatever their faith or non-faith background.
- The children's depth of Bible knowledge sustains them in daily life, providing a solid foundation for future life.
- Prayer is of the utmost importance, nurturing both children's and adults' spiritual journeys.

#### Areas to improve

- Embed the assessment of religious education [RE] to ensure the teaching staff have a good understanding of the progress pupils make to inform future planning and raise standards.
- Ensure pupils deepen their experience and understanding of the traditions of the Catholic and Anglican Church.
- Enable pupils to have additional occasions to plan and lead worship to support their personal development.

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

The Bishop's School is an inclusive Christian family community, rooted in its welcoming commitment to nurture and serve all its children and their families. Pupils are proud to belong, feel valued and achieve highly. This is because there is a strong commitment for everyone to model their new motto; 'live fully, laugh often, learn deeply, love as God loves you and let your light shine'. As a result, behaviour and relationships are very good. Data shows that, given their starting points, pupils achieve high results against national expectations, with some pupils making significant progress. The school attributes this to good teaching within an environment which maintains a Christian spirit. Vulnerable children who come from other schools succeed here because of the imbuing Christian values of the 'Bishops' way' which settles and calms them. Very good examples include pupils interacting with the school dog, which helps them grow in self-esteem. Pupils show Christian values in action through their charity fundraising. Good examples include Operation Christmas Child and supporting the local foodbank at Harvest. In addition, some pupils have written letters to Kenyan Christians. However, pupils say they would like to 'find out more about Christians in other parts of the world'. The school acknowledges this is an area for development. They show respect for diverse cultures and beliefs through RE and worship, which makes a good contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' personal development. However, pupils say they would welcome visiting more places of worship and 'learning more about our friends'. Currently, this does not happen sufficiently.

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

Daily collective worship, rooted in prayer and Christian liturgy, nurtures pupils' spiritual development well. Singing is strength of the school. All staff attend worship, which is recognised as an important part of the school day as it helps to build community. Pupils and parents speak highly of worship, especially weekly worship which takes place on a rota basis to accommodate all pupils in St Augustine's Church. Important saints' days are celebrated. Highlights of the year include Ash Wednesday and St Augustine's Day, the latter a Eucharistic celebration on the school field, which involves pupils and parents. Both Anglican and Catholic priests are welcome and regular visitors to school, leading worship and serving as governors. The Anglican priest and a member of St Augustine's congregation lead the weekly Worshippers Club which began in November 2014. Pupils who attend explore the Christian faith and ponder such questions as, 'What do you think God is like?' Pupils say, 'praying helps me to reflect' and they find worship 'peaceful'. This supports their spiritual development well. Pupils are growing in their understanding of The Holy Trinity. They speak of the mystery of God in three persons as, 'God and Jesus have so many different names'. They go on to say, 'God the Father is the creator of the universe. Jesus was born in a stable, not like a king. The Holy Spirit brings peace at Pentecost'. Class reflection areas support class worship and pupils' spiritual development well. Prayer books are well used around school, with children seeing answers to their own prayers. Parents speak highly of the importance of prayer in the life of this school. However, currently, pupils do not have enough occasions when they can plan and lead worship. The school recognises this supports pupils' personal development.

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

Pupils clearly enjoy their RE lessons in this school where RE is important, and teaching is consistently good and sometimes excellent, and in line with other core subjects. Pupils' biblical knowledge is especially good, giving them a firm foundation for life. It supports pupils' spiritual development very well. For example, younger pupils focus on biblical stories, such as Jesus in the temple, whilst older pupils reflect on favourite Bible verses, which help them in daily life. They enjoy the creative approaches to RE, which include termly Godly Play lessons, with their focus on asking key questions about biblical stories, helping them to reflect. Whilst pupils can relate the Christmas and Easter story, they are less sure about key Christian concepts, such as

incarnation. They say they 'have heard of salvation, but find it hard to explain' in their own words. Their knowledge of key Christian festivals, such as Pentecost, is good. They speak of 'the sending down of the Holy Ghost' and the disciples 'preaching to the crowd'. However, they are less secure about the importance and meaning of Ascension. The school recognises the importance of deepening pupils' knowledge of the respective traditions of the Catholic and Anglican Church. They are resolved to include this in future planning. Pupils are aware of their targets and know how to improve in their work. There are new RE subject leaders in post who are trialling a new assessment system. This is because the old system was not effective. The school has already identified that reviewing and adapting the new assessment processes ensures these are now child friendly and that children are involved in their own learning and self-assessment. Next steps, correctly recognised as part of whole school development, include embedding this so all teaching staff have a good understanding of pupil progress to inform planning and raise standards.

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

The unswerving dedication and Christian commitment of the leadership of Bishops' School is a key factor in its success to welcome and positively nurture all families, whatever their background. This ensures the Christian character of this joint school permeates all school life, underpinning all policy and practice. Pastoral care is a strength of this school, with teachers going above and beyond the call of duty. This is valued highly by the children and their parents, notably the care and confidence which is built in each child. For the children, every day is a lesson for them, modelled by staff. Consequently, children thrive and succeed. Bishops' leaders maintain that the more love is given, the better the children achieve. Indeed, the wellbeing of staff and pupils is a high priority. Clergy and senior leaders meet twice a year to plan worship themes. The frequency of Eucharistic services and time to talk with children about matters of faith is welcomed by clergy. Pupil voice is valued. RE and worship are monitored by a team of foundation governors. Thus, worship and RE meet statutory requirements and are well led, monitored and resourced. Links between the church and school are very strong with worshipping members, such as the chair of governors, regularly in school. Governors' meetings are underpinned by prayer. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed. Governors support the professional development of all staff, including those thinking about future leadership of church schools. Links with the wider community are also strong. Excellent examples include the outdoor Remembrance Service, with a bugler and the school choir playing significant parts. The two dioceses provide good support for the school. As such, parents speak highly of this joint school, which continually and faithfully serves their children and them.

SIAMS report January 2016 The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School, Chelmsford, Essex CMI 6ZQ