



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

William Ford Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Ford Road
Dagenham
Essex
RM10 9JS

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Barking and Dagenham

Date of inspection: 12 November 2015

Date of last inspection: November 2010

School's unique reference number: 101234

Headteacher: Richard Hopkins

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

William Ford is a large junior school serving an urban community of 360 pupils. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who come from minority ethnic groups is higher than average. Almost all pupils join the school from the neighbouring community school. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2015 and a number of new staff have joined the school at the start of term. The vicar is also relatively new in post.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of William Ford as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian vision and dedication of the leadership and management of the school, including staff, ensures that 'light shines in the darkness'.
- The worshipping life of this community where prayer and dance is important, enrich the daily lives and spiritual journeys of everyone.
- The school is a welcoming, inclusive and supporting Christian community which serves all children and their families.
- High quality religious knowledge and understanding of pupils makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development.

Areas to improve

- Enrich the quality of learning experiences in religious education [RE] by embedding the well-developed system of assessment and monitoring to include all pupils.
- Extend the programme of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' SMSC development.

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

William Ford's strong Christian character shines through and is richly embedded in every aspect of all school life. This school sustains an exemplary and inspirational learning environment. This gives perspective and meaning to all learning and enables all pupils to flourish. It has a long track record of enabling pupils to make significant progress in Key Stage 2. Attainment and progress is consequently consistently above national expectations. This is because the core Christian values of wisdom, trust, peace, friendship, hope and forgiveness underpin all school life and practice. Such values are readily articulated by the whole school community and are linked to Bible verses. Relationships are excellent and attitudes to learning are very positive. Behaviour is exemplary because Christian values are lived out and no forms of bullying are acceptable. Dedicated staff give their time and patience and go the extra mile to serve the children and their families. Very good examples include the family support worker who works closely with families as well as outside agencies. This takes place within a supportive and compassionate environment where Christian values are positively encouraged. This is especially true for families from ethnic minorities. Consequently, all groups of pupils achieve very well. Data shows an extremely positive picture for an area of high deprivation. The school attributes this to the unique status and difference which a church school makes. This is because the high expectations for all are a reflection of God's love for everyone as individuals. It is very evident that the Christian staff here have that distinctive understanding about the love of God for each person. In addition, pupils enjoy a wide range of achievement. This includes dance, which is a strength of the school for boys and girls alike. A strong feature at William Ford is Year 3's annual workshop with The Royal Ballet Company. Pupils experience their Christian value of service through their charity fundraising and show empathy for different cultures and communities. Pupils enjoy learning about different religions and cultures through their worship and RE and from one another. RE therefore makes a significant contribution to whole school ethos and values. Pupils are inspired by their teachers, with some pupils aspiring to becoming a priest or teacher because of the good role models they experience here.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Integral to the worship at William Ford is the gathering of the whole school community where pupils are confident to pray from the heart. This is because the school is a welcoming and accepting worshipping community where children feel safe and empowered to contribute to worship. Prayer and dance are strong features of this school, contributing significantly to the spiritual growth of the whole community. Excellent examples include Year 6's powerful Remembrance-tide dance to symbolise sacrifice. Evaluation of worship is effectively gathered through the Faith Council meeting with their vicar who then feeds back to staff and governors. Their viewpoints include more drama in worship and they welcome worship outdoors. Pupils say their vicar makes Bible stories fun and welcome discussing questions about faith and worship more frequently with him. Pupils are very conversant with Anglican liturgy and the pattern of the church year, for example, referring to ordinary time. Furthermore, pupils show good knowledge of their parish church's founding saints, St Peter and St Paul. They recall a visit from the Bishop of Chelmsford who 'gave us a lovely prayer to reflect upon'. Their age appropriate understanding of The Holy Trinity is very good. This is because worship strongly incorporates Trinity at its heart, drawing attention to its significance whenever possible. Excellent examples include the use of a white cloth to represent God. This is folded and cradled to signify the infant Christ and as a blanket symbolises the Holy Spirit. Pupils explain this as God the Father who is 'the maker of the world who protects us. Jesus' love for us is so big it spreads everywhere. Jesus came to earth through the Virgin Mary. God the Son is the Saviour of the world. The Holy Spirit wraps us around his love'.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE at William Ford is highly regarded and enjoys the same status as other core subject areas of the curriculum. Engaging and creative RE makes a very strong contribution to the school's Christian character and to pupils' SMSC development. This is because there is a very strong emphasis on creativity and originality as well as focussing on pupils with special educational needs and high attaining pupils to succeed. Furthermore, RE is very well led by a member of the senior leadership team. She meets termly with pupils and gathers evidence through video diaries as well as talking to pupils and carrying out book scrutinies.

Lesson observations are carried out by the headteacher and RE subject leader and ensure teachers ask challenging questions. Teaching is consistently good, and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are planned so that staff are successful in delivering their aims and are always focussed on the school's action plan. A consequence of thorough planning and high quality lessons which inspire and differentiate is that pupils engage in their learning. They also make rapid progress in their own understanding and support each other's progress. As a result, by the end of Year 6, 100% pupils make expected progress and 60% pupils exceed expected progress, with some achieving Level 6. Pupils say they 'enjoy RE because, even though we are a church school, we don't just focus on Christianity'. They enjoy learning about different religions, such as Judaism and Islam. Pupils have a very good level of understanding key religious ideas and concepts. They can relate the Christian narrative very well and can explain incarnation, salvation, Ascension, Pentecost and The Holy Trinity in their own words. Pupils enjoy asking important reflective questions in lessons, such as 'Is it ever right to kill?' and 'What did Peter do wrong in the story?' Self-assessment tasks are a strong feature in pupil books. New this year are evidence books which staff find very helpful in looking at the big picture. Pupils comment, 'in this school everyone is allowed to be open minded'. High quality RE displays around school reinforce its importance. The school is beginning to use an on-entry assessment in Year 3 in order to help them track progress across the whole key stage. In addition, the school already targets high attaining and disadvantaged pupils as an important part of its practice. However, the school has rightly identified that embedding this important, but well-developed work is an on-going area for development. A programme of visits and visitors to RE lessons is in place. However, the school has rightly identified the need to extend this programme further to enhance pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

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

The headteacher, deputy headteacher, RE subject leader and governors all have a strong Christian vision and work together exceptionally well. All God's children are valued, whether they are high achievers or not. The school's aim is for everyone to succeed in all areas of life, including spiritual growth. Consequently the wellbeing of all pupils and staff are central to the school's strategic direction. The Christian character of the school is an integral part of the headteacher's report to governors. Governors' self-evaluation of the school is robust and rigorous. It consistently informs the school's performance and the SMSC development of pupils. RE and worship meet statutory requirements and are well led and managed by the dedicated RE subject leader. All areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed, with the school identifying clear priorities for action. This includes supporting other local church schools and sharing good practice. Governors successfully support the training needs of staff. This includes the development of staff new to school as well as looking to the future leadership of the school. Indeed, staff and governors have benefitted from diocesan training and support. They access all courses which have a focus on different aspects of the distinctive Christian character of church schools. It is evident that everyone knows the mission of the school. Pupil and parental engagement is strong. Pupils have a voice through the Faith Council, school council and house system. Parents speak highly of how 'all are welcomed into the ethos of the school' and the 'warmth and continuity here which is unchanging in essence'. They are full of praise for the teaching staff who welcome pupils in and send them out 'happy and disciplined'. Consequently, there is smooth transition into Year 3 from the community infant school and onto church secondary education for some pupils. This is reinforced through Christian values lived out at home and through going to church at key times. Community links are very strong, especially with the parish church. This is because the majority of governors are members of St Peter and St Paul Church. In addition, the vicar is a welcome visitor to school. He meets with the Faith Council and feeds back their viewpoint to the whole governing body. Thus, everyone works together exceedingly well to ensure the school's Christian distinctiveness is celebrated and preserved.