



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

### Orsett C.E Primary School

School Lane  
Orsett  
Grays RM16 3JR

#### Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Thurrock

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Date of last inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> April 2010

School's unique reference number: 115171      Headteacher: Mrs E.F. Godfrey

Inspector's name and number: Mr Graham Lancaster: 713

#### School context

Orsett CE Primary is an average sized school which serves the local village and adjacent towns. The school is now over-subscribed. The school has a below average proportion pupil eligible for Pupil Premium and above the national average for pupil with special educational needs. Following the last inspection a new headteacher was appointed and there was a considerable turnover of teaching staff.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Orsett C.E. Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values are deeply embedded in the ethos of the school and have significant impact on pupil's lives, their relationships and their understanding and appreciation of the world around them.
- Outstanding leadership has secured improved achievements for pupils across all subject areas including RE, thereby increasing educational and life chances for every child. Leaders are ambitious and creative to secure further gains.
- Pupils have a breadth and depth of knowledge of RE, drawn from a clear enjoyment of and active participation in highly effective class lessons and collective worship.

#### Areas to improve

- To build on the strong platform of teaching expertise so that a greater proportion of RE lessons are outstanding by:
  - Continuing to increase teachers' subject knowledge so that they are confident to adjust the course of learning in line with pupil response
  - Ensuring that marking consistently relates to the RE learning intentions
- To continue developments in the contribution pupils, parents and governors make to the evaluation and further development of collective worship.

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

The school's mission statement 'Motivating and inspiring our children to achieve – in a creative and caring Christian community' is prominent on the school's website and in shared areas within the building. It is reinforced in interactive displays to which large numbers of pupils have contributed. It is most clearly manifest however in the improved outcomes of pupils of all levels of ability over the past three years and in the Christian ethos which has been progressively strengthened by the school's leadership. Attendance has risen and is now above the national average. Parents speak of the 'dramatic improvements in all areas of the school'. They give examples of their children coming home from school with "Christian habits and influences". Parents, governors, staff and pupils clearly articulate the significance of the school's Christian values in the daily life of the school. Pupils are highly confident and reflective when expressing their ideas and views both within discussions and in RE lessons, drawing on previous learning and their own experience, for example, a spontaneous discussion in Year 6 of the lasting legacy of religious leaders from a variety of faiths against that of saints and celebrities and what they might like to be remembered for. They engage wholeheartedly in RE and speak freely of the way it influences their thinking and relationships with one another and underpins the ethos of the school. Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith is reinforced by the "Global Christianity" theme of the annual RE week, by the school's link with Malawi and by visitors such as a Nigerian pastor who regularly takes assembly. The learning environment is stimulating and supports pupil progress both in the core subjects including RE and spiritual development. Opportunities for prayer are provided in shared areas and within the classroom. For example, a prayer box in the reception classrooms for friends and family. One pupil said, 'I love to just sit here and quietly read through the prayers. It helps me'. All classes contributed to the Orsett '10 commandments' which underpin Christian values, and have also served as a focus for improving pupil behaviour. Since their introduction pupils report that they 'get on better with each other'. Standards of behaviour are exemplary. The Pupil Council contributes to determining the choice of a wide range of local, national and international charities the school supports. Through this they experience the values of compassion, generosity and sharing.

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

All pupils and staff engage enthusiastically in collective worship. They recognise its centrality in school life and pupils refer back to assemblies that have made a particular impression on them. Collective worship begins with a Trinitarian statement the meaning of which has been thoroughly explored. Pupils actively contribute to all acts of collective worship, particularly in the regular 'Pupil Led' assemblies. These sessions have enabled pupils to develop their own leadership skills and have a far greater understanding of worship and the meaning and application of bible stories. Bible stories are included in language which is accessible to pupils of all ages. Themes are drawn from the stories which pupils can apply to their own lives. The effectiveness of planning was an area for development in the last inspection. It is now thorough and imaginative and a range of adults take responsibility for leading, including local clergy from a range of denominations, including a Nigerian pastor. Key Christian festivals are celebrated in the Parish Church and parental support of these occasions has increased to the point of there being standing room only. To enhance the spiritual dimension the focal point for worship includes a highly effective projected picture which is selected each day by the pupils. Opportunities for collective reflection and prayer are not only provided in collective worship but within RE lessons. These are led in an inclusive and sensitive fashion so that all can take part. Pupils value and respect these special times and openly share items for prayer with one another. Although pupils are engaged in evaluating the pupil led assemblies, a systematic approach to pupil, parents and governors contributing to the evaluation of collective worship has yet to be established.

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

As the result of teaching which is consistently at least good, with much that is outstanding, standards have risen steadily. Teaching is underpinned by a comprehensive scheme of work

and a wide range of supporting materials. Where a gap remains with national standards this is narrowing rapidly. Well-established pupil tracking systems ensure that high expectations are maintained for all, though there is scope for on-going pupil assessment strategies to be further refined and embedded. In the classroom and in discussions pupils demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Pupils collaborate very well, sharing their ideas and thoughts with confidence and trust in one another. Pupils look forward to RE lessons and expect not only to learn about religion but to apply learning to their own lives. For example when Year 4 pupils were exploring Christians' use of descriptive language a child wrote; 'When it is a dark day Jesus is my light that shimmers through the darkness and disappears my fears'. Teachers use imaginative and creative approaches and a wide range of teaching strategies with the result that pupils are completely engaged. In a Year 6 lesson pupils used pictures of saints and modern day celebrities to explore the legacy they might wish to leave behind them – their 'footprint'. Work is effectively planned to meet the needs of pupils of all levels of ability in RE as well as in their core skills. Pupils draw on previous learning without prompting and make links between the range of faiths studied. Marking provides opportunities for pupils to respond to comments from teachers about how they can improve their work. It is appropriately focused on their learning and understanding of RE. The subject leader has a high level of subject knowledge, coupled with infectious enthusiasm and ambition for her subject. She carries out rigorous evaluation of the provision for RE. She produces action plans with clear priorities for improvement within defined time frames, for example extending the use of the local parish church as a resource for first hand RE teaching.

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

Under the leadership of a new headteacher, RE subject leader and effective governors Orsett Primary School has been on a rapid and transformational journey of improvement as a church school for the past three years. The headteacher's vision for the school inextricably links the provision of the very best learning opportunities for every pupil with embedded Christian values which she seeks to exemplify. Marked progress has been made against areas identified for improvement in the previous SIAS inspection report. To secure the considerable improvements made in pupil attainment and to transform the learning opportunities in all curriculum areas there have been significant changes in the staff team including the recruitment of an outstanding RE subject leader. A comprehensive professional development programme has resulted in staff being confident and effective in their teaching of RE and the whole school community being united and supported in reaching for their agreed vision. There is clear evidence of the RE leader's impact against recent priorities of 'developing the world religions dimension' and strengthening opportunities for pupils to learn from religion. She is particularly pleased with the way in which pupils contribute to RE from their depth of knowledge and understanding. Parents confirm that the leadership of the school has 'pulled together high expectations and a celebration of the achievements of every individual into a cohesive whole'. 'I now want to give back something to the school and feel that I can. Before that wasn't the case.' Governors are well informed through regular visits and feedback to the curriculum committee. A specific link governor for RE and collective worship has recently been appointed and is looking forward to working alongside school leaders to support and challenge. Leaders have sought and drawn on all support available, including the diocese and other agencies. A successful partnership has been formed with two other local church schools, which is led by a steering group comprising representative governors and the three headteachers. Robust and accurate self-evaluation using the diocesan toolkit has led to the accurate identification of priorities for improvement and there is the ambition and drive to continue the drive for further improvement. Wide ranging opportunities are created to motivate and inspire children to achieve in a creative and caring Christian community.

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