



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christ Church (Erith) Church of England Primary Academy

Lesney Park Road
Erith
DA8 3DG

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: n/a

Dates of inspection: 26 November 2014

Date of last inspection: 16 October 2009

School's unique reference number: 139212

Head of school: Gillian Ball (executive headteacher: Beverley Gardner)

Inspector's name and number: Anne Southgate 820

School context

The school became a sponsored academy in the Trinitas Academy Trust in May 2013. The previous headteacher is now the executive headteacher. Christ Church is currently expanding to a three form entry school, in response to local need. There has been recent building work to accommodate growing pupil numbers. Over half of the children are from black African families. Most of the pupils are from Christian backgrounds, although there is a small number of Sikhs and Muslims. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and pupil premium is low, but deprivation is high.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church (Erith) as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The creation of a reflective and prayerful environment, which enables the whole school community to deepen its spirituality.
- Respect for people's differences leads to an harmonious community, where all are valued as children of God.
- Behaviour is exceptional as a result of pupils being helped to reflect on their actions.
- The very strong and effective partnerships with Trinitas Academy Trust and with the local church which increase the resources of the school to secure ever higher achievement.

Areas to improve

- Develop a deeper understanding of the specifically Christian basis for the school's Christian values amongst the whole school community, so that everyone fully appreciates why they have been chosen.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to achieve higher levels in learning from religion in religious education (RE) so that all fulfil their potential.

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

Christ Church is a rapidly improving church school. The Christian ethos is the starting point for school improvement. Achievement has risen and is now at or above national averages. The school's Christian values of respect, forgiveness, honesty and joy, are rooted in the belief that everyone is a child of God, who is loved and forgiven. This leads to a deep sense of spirituality in the school. Time for both adults and children to reflect is given frequently throughout the day. This means that pupils reflect in a mature way on their learning, and on their behaviour. As a result, behaviour is exceptional, and there are clear links to the school's Christian values. An example of this is the use of restorative justice, which is linked to forgiveness. RE helps pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, by allowing them to reflect on issues raised by religion. Being a church school is central to the day to day life of the whole community. Parents rejoice that their children are keen to express their faith at school and at home. Pupils talk openly about how the school has helped them to develop their faith, for example, "school helps me connect with God". Those from other faith backgrounds feel welcomed and included. There is an enormous respect for those who are different, as it is recognised that we are all children of God. Not everyone, however, is confident in expressing a clear Christian basis for the school's chosen values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school has developed a deep sense of reverence and prayerfulness in collective worship. This shows significant progress since the last SIAS inspection. A visual focus now exists in the form of a lit candle and a large candle, projected at the front of the room. Pupils are exceptionally well engaged, and very keen to participate in worship. The level of reflection amongst the whole community is impressive. After being given time to reflect on the meaning of Jesus as the bread of life, one key stage one child said, "If you feed on Jesus, you will never be alone." Pupils are given a thought to take back to class to consider. This is then revisited the next day. Pupils value being able to discuss this worship thought, and relate it to their learning and behaviour. Anglican prayers and responses are used, and the pupils are very familiar with them. Christian festivals are celebrated, and this has helped pupils to develop an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Singing is joyful, and parents are happy that their children sing Christian songs that they have learnt when they come home. A range of adults leads worship. A recently formed 'fellowship group' of pupils now suggests themes and ideas for worship, although their own leadership of worship is limited. The school has fully addressed the issue from the previous inspection to improve the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. Evaluation is used to improve future collective worship. For example, pupils requested that they take their class candle back to their classrooms together with the question for reflection. Collective worship provides a very calm, reflective start to the day and allows the whole school community to grow spiritually.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is given high status, and progress is tracked in the same way as in other core subjects. Standards, particularly relating to how pupils learn from religion, are high, and are at least in line with other subjects. The subject leader is knowledgeable, and has worked hard to ensure that all teachers are equipped to deliver RE to their classes confidently. The curriculum is well planned. The majority of teaching is good. The subject leader ensures that RE is monitored and that work is properly assessed, in line with school policy. Marking encourages pupils to reflect on, and to improve their work. Evidence in books demonstrates that pupils have limited opportunities to achieve the higher levels in learning about religion. Levels of achievement, based on the current moderation model are not consistently reliable at the higher levels. Creative activities allow pupils to reflect well on the issues raised by their RE lessons, and this is sometimes related to the act of collective worship. Care needs to be

taken, however, to ensure that RE is not confused with collective worship. Pupils enjoy learning about other religions and recognise that this leads to greater respect for people who have different beliefs from themselves. Pupils generally take care over their work, enjoy their learning and want to achieve well in RE.

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

There is an effective working relationship between the executive headteacher and the head of school. Both are highly committed to continuing to develop the Christian character of the school. They have worked to deepen the Christian ethos in recent years, and they have created a very reflective and prayerful environment. This has an impact on all that the school does, and has led to significant, recent improvements in standards. An assistant headteacher leads RE, collective worship and ethos. She is currently undertaking the National Professional Qualification for Senior Leaders. This demonstrates the importance which the school places on continuing to develop the areas that she leads. There are very robust self-evaluation systems in place, which include all stakeholders. These systems ensure that the school continues to improve. Leaders are highly effective in securing future leadership for church schools. Every candidate interviewed for a post at the school is asked how they can help to develop the Christian ethos. The induction for new staff helps them to understand what is distinctive about church schools. Training for church school leaders is taken very seriously. Several members of staff have benefited from diocesan led training, and the Trinitas Trust also supports staff training. As a result, staff morale is high, adults feel valued, and they have a good understanding of the distinctiveness of a church school. There are very effective partnerships with the Trinitas Academy Trust, parents and the local church, all of which are mutually beneficial. The incumbent fully understands and supports the school's Christian ethos. The arrangements for both RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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