



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Platt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Maidstone Road, St Mary's Platt, TN15 8JY

Previous SIAS grade: outstanding

Current inspection grade: good

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 8 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 29 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 118728

Headteacher: Hannah Walters

Inspector's name and number: Anne Southgate 820

School context

Platt is a smaller than average sized primary school. Nearly all pupils are from white British backgrounds and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special needs is average. There has been a period of significant turbulence in leadership since the last SIAS inspection, although the current leadership team is now providing stability. Ofsted judged the school to require improvement in June 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Platt as a Church of England school are good

- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher is securing rapid improvement
- The headteacher has created a Christian community that cares, learns and forgives together, based on the teachings of Jesus
- The strong bond with the parish church and active involvement of the incumbent bring many benefits to the school
- Pupils are happy and behave exceptionally well

Areas to improve

- Ensure consistently good practice in Religious Education (RE), including in assessment
- Ensure the Christian basis for the school's values is explicit amongst the whole school community

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

The headteacher has created a strong Christian community, after a period of instability in the school. All stakeholders agree that they are "a family that cares, learns and forgives together". This is clear in the school's documentation, which addresses an issue from the previous SIAS inspection. The values are based on Jesus' teaching, but the specific stories behind them are

not clear to everyone. These values lead to high expectations and good achievement. Despite being housed in old and deteriorating buildings, the environment is cheerful and proclaims the Christian character of the school. Each individual's achievements are celebrated. Parents comment on how this has increased their children's confidence. The school demonstrates its Christian values in the way it treats the whole school community as a family. Close attention is paid to the achievement and wellbeing of each individual, including those in vulnerable groups. The school works with families to support them, and to provide them with strategies to help their children. This is accelerating progress. The school's admissions policy results in a significant proportion of pupils whose families are not practising Christians. This creates an inclusive school, which serves the local community. It also ensures that pupils learn alongside those who are different from themselves, enabling them to appreciate a diversity of views. However, pupils only have limited opportunities to develop their cultural understanding. Parents are passionate about the positive impact of the Christian ethos on their children. For example, "my child is so happy because they are loved, and taught to care for and to forgive others". Pupils behave exceptionally well. They make moral decisions using the school's Christian values and this ensures that relationships in the school are good. Most pupils enjoy RE and reflect on what they learn.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship brings all members of the school community together, and reinforces their identity as a Christian family. Pupils and adults reflect on the themes of worship, and continue to do so throughout the day and at home. The themes frequently reflect the school's Christian values. Both adults and pupils are fully engaged and participate actively in worship. This enables them to develop spiritually. Adults say that they feel "uplifted" in worship. Feedback from pupils has led to greater involvement of older pupils in leading worship. They light the candles, read the prayers that they have written, and lead Anglican responses. Younger children however, would like to have more opportunity to lead worship. Pupils learn about Christian beliefs and practices in collective worship. The incumbent has been impressed by pupils' knowledge of Christianity. However, pupils are less secure in their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer punctuates the school day, and time is given to gather one's thoughts before prayers are said. Pupils and adults therefore, see collective worship as an important time for reflection. The incumbent is actively involved both in school worship and in leading school services in the church. She ensures that pupils have a wide experience of Anglican liturgy, including celebrating key Christian festivals. Leaders from other Christian denominations occasionally lead worship at school, ensuring that pupils are aware of other traditions. Representatives of a variety of charities have spoken to pupils in worship. This has led to a wide range of fund raising activities, as pupils want to show that they cared for others. Monitoring and evaluation is strong, and involves a range of stakeholders. This has led to improvements, such as ensuring that pupils stand still and speak slowly when leading aspects of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

RE is given a high profile within the school. The new leader of RE is helping teachers to develop their confidence to teach this subject. There is however, inconsistency in the quality of RE teaching throughout the school. This means that the recording of what pupils learn about religions is sometimes weak, particularly where the teacher's own knowledge is not strong. In the best lessons, pupils learn well. In these lessons, skilful questioning and careful, formative marking lead to deep thinking and good progress. Most pupils achieve in line with national expectations. Assessment systems are now in place, but these are not used consistently across all year groups. Work is not consistently differentiated, so that the individual learning needs of pupils are not always addressed effectively. However, RE is now exceptionally well led and, as a result, rapid progress is being made. Pupils reflect on their learning and often relate this to the school's Christian values. The curriculum enables pupils to learn about Christianity and about other world faiths. Monitoring is thorough, and there are clear and appropriate plans for improvement. Teachers are keen to improve their practice,

and are benefitting from the training organised by the school and the diocese.

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

The headteacher has created a happy school with a strong sense of being a Christian community. This has resulted in good achievement and in outstanding behaviour. Leadership is characterised by honesty, and a genuine desire to improve. This is rooted in a vision of the school as a Christian family that cares, learns and forgives, based on the teachings of Jesus. As a result, rapid improvement is being made. Effective systems for monitoring and evaluation as a church school are in place. These involve all stakeholders. Church school self-evaluation and planned actions are an important part of both governors' meetings and of the school improvement plan. The headteacher ensures that appropriate and effective training for teachers and the new RE leader is undertaken. This is bringing about improved practice and developing teachers as future leaders of church schools. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The development of RE has a high priority and the appointment of an effective, new RE leader is leading to higher standards. The school is an integral part of the local community and of the parish. The incumbent is highly supportive and is able to offer challenge to the school. The issue from the last SIAS inspection to involve more foundation governors in the work of the school has been fully addressed. There is a strong bond between the school and the local church, which is beneficial to both parties. Large numbers of families attend special school services in the church, and church members are active in supporting the school.

SIAMS report July 2015, Platt CE VA primary school, TN15 8JY