

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School

Trinity Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 1LU

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Kent

Date of inspection: 5th July 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 118848

Acting Headteacher: Marc Dockrell

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

School context

Holy Trinity is a larger than average Church of England primary school in the centre of Gravesend. It serves an ethnically and religiously mixed community. In February 2016, the school was judged by OfSTED to be 'requires improvement'. However, the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils was judged to be good. The headteacher left recently. The school's deputy headteacher is currently leading the school. To assist in its ongoing development, an experienced associate headteacher works in school for two days each week. Plans are ongoing to appoint an interim headteacher for the autumn term 2016 and a substantive headteacher for January 2017.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity Gravesend school as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian values of love, honesty and respect are well expressed through its caring atmosphere. This impacts positively on the strong sense of belonging and supportive relationships evident across the school.
- The worship programme holds an important part in school life and contributes positively to pupils' good spiritual and moral development.
- Religious education (RE) holds a central place in the curriculum and, through it, the school's underpinning Christian ethos is well expressed.
- Current leadership is well focused on improving academic outcomes for pupils, particularly the more able, and have taken some credible steps to begin this process. For example, through using data more accurately to inform teaching.

Areas to improve

- Increase the role of governors in monitoring the school's Christian distinctiveness and its impact on pupils' academic achievement and progress.
- Develop a reflective prayer area in the school grounds to complement the reflection areas within classrooms.

- Improve teaching and learning in RE by:
 - ensuring that pupils, especially the more able, are consistently supported and challenged to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills;
 - extending appropriate and effective links with other curriculum areas and topic work.

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

The school's Christian and inclusive character ensures that its pupils and their families, irrespective of their background, feel part of Holy Trinity school. Its Christian values of 'love, honesty and respect' are very well known and appropriately underpin its life and work. Many pupils can talk about the values but they cannot consistently explain their explicit links to the Christian faith. Relationships are strong and pupils' good behaviour is reflected in a happy and caring atmosphere, with attendance that is well above the national average. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively if it does occur. Nonetheless, as identified by its recent OfSTED inspection report, pupils, especially the more able, do not make the academic progress that they should. The school has rightly prioritised this for further development and has already implemented plans which are beginning to impact positively. This is clearly linked for school leaders, governors and the majority of staff, to their expressed Christian vision of helping pupils to flourish as children of God. The school provides a good range of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development to which pupils respond enthusiastically. Good SMSC development contributes well to the good behaviour and care for each other which is evident around the school. It impacts on their behaviour out of school. For example, on recent trips to Paris and to the National Gallery, pupils' politeness, patience and care were positively commented on by members of the public. Charitable giving is seen as an expression of the school's underpinning Christian values. RE makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of diversity and difference in God's world. It contributes well to the school's Christian ethos. As a pupil reflected, 'RE helps you think about God, yourself and others'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The worship programme plays an important part in expressing and supporting the school's Christian foundation. Planning for worship is taken seriously by all involved and its importance and impact is evident. Through worship, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the importance of Jesus for Christians as well as a good, age-appropriate understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The worship programme reinforces the school's Christian values well. It encourages a basic understanding of key times of the Christian year such as Christmas, Epiphany and Easter. Bible stories are sometimes used during worship. This helps pupils' understanding of the Bible's importance as 'the Word of God' for Christians. The daily worship programme is appropriately extended by a termly Eucharist service and by end of term services in one of three local Anglican parishes. Pupils rightly recognise that worship 'brings us together to think about God'. Pupils enjoy worship especially singing and 'having different people lead it'. During worship, the school community celebrates the achievements of its different members. This includes commending those who have shown a school value or one of the biblical 'Fruit of the Spirit' through their actions and behaviour. Through the worship programme, with appropriate links to RE, pupils have a developing understanding of the Lord's Prayer and its importance. Pupils recognise that prayer is an important way in which someone 'communicates with God'. They know that there are different types of prayer including 'thanking and asking prayers'. Prayer spaces in each classroom enhance provision and encourage prayer or reflection outside of formal worship time. The school grounds do not have an appropriate space for quietness, prayer and reflection. The timing of some acts of worship have changed recently so that many are in the afternoon. The rationale is to allow reflection time at the end of the school day. Currently, this change of timing is not popular with many pupils. All worship takes place as a whole school which has a very positive impact overall. However, it does mean that the school is limited in how it provides an opportunity for age specific worship to take place. Whilst being explicitly Christian, the programme is properly inclusive of pupils and adults from other

backgrounds. Thus it supports spiritual and moral development opportunities well.

The effectiveness of RE is good

RE is recognised as a 'core subject' and seen as important in developing 'what we know and think about religion and about God in the world today'. Attainment is broadly in line or sometimes better than national expectations. Attainment is good in relation to standards found in other areas of the curriculum. The RE scheme of work is in the process of being reviewed in line with local and national initiatives. Pupils engage well with RE and enjoy it. It has an appropriate balance between content which focuses on Christianity and that which focuses on other world faiths. There are some missed opportunities for linking RE appropriately with some of the topic work within each year group. Pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on their learning and to think about the significance of faith for themselves and for others. Teaching is good overall. However, the development of such skills as investigation, interpretation, evaluation and analysis are not a sufficient focus to provide support and challenge across the RE curriculum. This means that pupils, especially the more able, are not consistently provided with opportunities and activities that really challenge them to give of their best. Assessment procedures are in place that are beginning to be used to inform planning, teaching and learning. Teachers have begun to take more ownership of ensuring that targets for improvement set for their class are accurate and are working more effectively to achieve them. The subject leader and the link governor for RE and worship work effectively together to maintain the high profile that RE has across the school. The subject leader is well informed about current developments in RE and shares these with leaders and teaching staff appropriately.

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

Since the previous denominational inspection, the school has gone through a period of change and turbulence. This culminated in OfSTED judging it as 'requiring improvement' earlier this academic year. The deputy headteacher took up his role in September 2015. In February 2016, he became acting headteacher. He and a part-time associate headteacher are working closely together. Rightly, their focus is to address key issues raised by the OfSTED report whilst sustaining the school's Christian vision, ethos and values. In this, they are being well supported by the local authority and by the Diocese of Rochester. Teaching and support staff, as well as parents and pupils, have confidence in the school's interim leadership. This means that they are supportive and that the community is 'pulling together' during this time of uncertainty. This 'we are in it together for the children' attitude is clearly linked to the school's vision of each pupil, 'flourishing as a child of God'. Governors are committed to the school and have realised the need to be more active in supporting and challenging school developments. They have begun to do this successfully. Their knowledge of the school and its development priorities is clear and accurate. Structural changes to the way in which governors are linked to areas of the development plan are already impacting on the speed of progress. Parents are kept suitably informed about their children's education. They appreciate the school's care and concern and recognise this as part of its distinctive Christian and inclusive ethos. Strong links with Anglican parishes in the town impact positively on the school's character and on pupils' religious, spiritual and moral development. Staff are encouraged to develop professionally whilst working within a church school. For example, as one teacher put it, 'the school helps you follow your dreams'. Whole staff training and teachers taking part in a specific training course provided by the Diocese on working in a church school enhances provision. Worship and RE both meet statutory requirements. Areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have been appropriately addressed.

Holy Trinity CE (VA) Primary School, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 1LU