



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Moreton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Moreton
Ongar
Essex CM5 0JD

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex

Dates of inspection: 10 March 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 115188

Headteacher: Karen Wallace

Inspector's name and number: Gillian Holmes 849

School context

Moreton Church of England Voluntary Aided school is a one form entry primary school. It serves a dispersed rural catchment, as well as catering for children from the suburbs of Harlow. Most pupils have English as their first language and levels of special educational needs are below the national average. The headteacher has been in post substantively since September 2015, having taken over on a temporary basis in January 2015. She is also the executive headteacher of a community primary school in the same local authority. The two schools work formally and very closely together.

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

- The school's distinctively Christian values are very well embedded and lived out by both pupils and staff in its daily life and work.
- The commitment of the governing body to ensuring that the ongoing development of Moreton's Christian distinctiveness is their priority.
- The school as a Christian community develops positive attitudes amongst the pupils allowing them to become confident, independent learners.
- Successful progress since the previous denominational report, has for example, resulted in very effective communication systems being established between the school and parents/carers.

Areas to improve

- Further enhance the relationship between the school and the other local church schools to share expertise and good practice.
- Extend the network of visitors into school from faith communities and plan visits to places of worship to deepen pupils' understanding of a range of faiths and cultures.

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

The school is committed to, and successful in, providing high quality education for all pupils explicitly based on its Christian foundation. Its Christian ethos is underpinned by 7 values – ‘we are kind, gentle, polite, honest, we listen to each other and work hard, we have respect for the world’ These values are theologically grounded by stories from the Bible and by reference to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The school rightly describes itself as a community where ‘we seek to be people who are filled with the Holy Spirit’. Pupils can confidently explain what this means to them. Governors and staff have an agreed and specific definition of spirituality in the school. It is expressed as providing children with the freedom to ask big questions about life, a chance to ponder and opportunities for awe and wonder about God’s creation. The Christian values also encompass the school’s work around British values which the school addresses very well. The values are deeply embedded in everything the school does. As a consequence behaviour is excellent. Incidents of bullying are few and far between but are dealt with swiftly and fairly, in keeping with the school’s Christian ethos. Pupils enjoy coming to school and for the majority of pupils attendance is excellent. The school works hard to support individual families. There have been no exclusions. Parents and pupils are supportive of the way in which the school includes everyone rightly linking this to its Christian ethos of nurture and support. Attainment is good or better than the national average. Pupils of all abilities have access to a varied and appropriate curriculum which enables them to make at least expected or greater progress. Spiritual, moral and social development opportunities are outstanding through the curriculum and extra curriculum activities. The school has a close link with a school in Kenya. Pupils write to their African friends, take part in fund-raising activities, and there are shared visits between the two schools. This link fosters pupils’ understanding of cultural difference. A week of activities is planned for the summer term to give pupils more opportunities to understand their own and other people’s culture. Pupils are excited and challenged by RE which clearly enhances the school’s Christian distinctiveness.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Worship is central to school life. Pupils feel that they have ownership because they regularly plan and lead worship. There is a team of pupils who take it in turns to complete daily monitoring sheets which are used to make worship more exciting and meaningful. Parents and governors also attend worship and play a monitoring role. The very effective worship coordinator regularly collates and acts upon the evaluations. This is well supported by the headteacher and maintains the quality and effectiveness of worship. The programme is exciting and innovative. Themes are well planned to illustrate the Christian values and increase pupils’ Bible knowledge. Pupils can talk confidently about stories from the old and new testament as well as the life of Jesus Christ. This contributes significantly to school life and to its Christian distinctiveness as well as to pupils’ outstanding spiritual and moral development. Worship is inspirational and inclusive and valued by all members of the school community. Worship begins with pupils greeting everyone in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It ends with everyone offering words of peace to each other. Class teachers are involved in leading worship and supporting the pupils when they contribute. Prayer and reflection are very important to school life. This is demonstrated in many ways, for example there are fortnightly prayer groups arranged in school for the children and their families by the retired vicar. Each class has a prayer corner where pupils can go at any time of the day for quiet reflection and prayer. The use of the local church at festival times and for end of term services enhances the worship programme significantly. All stakeholders are encouraged to join in worship with the school on these occasions. The retired vicar leads worship in school weekly. He has ensured that pupils are aware of Anglican practices including the seasons of the church’s year. This enhances the worship programme and helps pupils develop a good understanding of Anglican worship practices.

The impact of religious education on the school community is good.

RE has a high profile in the school and effectively enhances the school's Christian distinctiveness. It supports school values well. RE is well led and managed by a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader. He provides training and support for teachers and carries out a comprehensive monitoring programme. Feedback from the monitoring is discussed with staff and governors. This has contributed to improvements in teaching, progress that is at least good and attainment in RE that is better than national expectations. A new assessment system accurately monitors learning and progress. Pupils have RE targets linked to skills such as enquiry, analysis and interpretation. They talk knowledgeably about what they have learned about Christianity and other faiths. The school has rightly identified the need to extend the number of visitors from different faith communities coming into school along with improving the range of visits to places of worship. Support from the Diocese and staff meeting time strengthens teachers' confidence in teaching RE which is mainly good and sometimes outstanding. A range of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, drama, developing thinking skills and quiet reflection are used well to deliver lively lessons. Two teachers have received training on an approach to learning called 'Godly Play' which supports reflective approaches to learning. Firm plans are in place to extend this approach across the school. The school takes seriously pupils knowledge and understanding of the Bible. Pupils are given their own children's Bible when they enter school and a Good News Bible when they enter Y3. These are used extensively in RE lessons and for personal reading. Pupils are encouraged to ask 'big questions' which help them to build their understanding of the Christian faith, other faiths and how to question moral issues. RE makes a very good contribution to the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development evident across the school.

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

A supportive Christian family community has been created through the commitment of the current headteacher and her predecessor, staff and governors. The whole curriculum is underpinned by a Christian vision for education and contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This vision is founded on the school's Christian values which have been reviewed and adopted by the school over the past year. Staff, pupils and governors were involved in their introduction and embedding. As a consequence the school is a welcoming, nurturing, caring, inclusive and celebratory place. The school has successfully addressed each of the areas for improvement from the previous denominational inspection. Pupils now play a significant role in planning and leading worship. Communication between the school and parents/carers is now excellent. This leads to them being very well informed about what and how their children are learning and about the school's Christian values. Parents are very supportive of the school's overarching Christian ethos. The senior teacher's excellent leadership of RE and worship contributes significantly to the school's Christian ethos. Arrangements for RE and worship meet statutory requirements. At present there is an interregnum in the parish, but links with the school remain excellent. A retired vicar (who lives locally) is a frequent visitor to school. His contribution to prayer and worship and to the pastoral care of pupils and staff is significant. His involvement, along with the foundation governors (a number of which are involved in the local church) has been pivotal in the positive development of the school's Christian distinctiveness and service. The school works closely with the Diocese. Productive links with local church schools are developing, sharing training and expertise. Staff are well supported for working in a church school and in-service training has a high priority. This includes succession planning to prepare staff for leadership within a church school. Senior leaders and governors know the school well. The result is accurate self-evaluation which is used confidently to monitor progress against exacting targets. It also informs a culture of continuous improvement.