

Parsons Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Templewood Road

Colchester

Essex

CO4 3EZ

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex

Dates of inspection: 3/7/2013

Date of last inspection: 24/11/2008

School's unique reference number: 115088

Headteacher: Sheena Clover

Inspector's name and number: Iain Gunn 727

School context

Parsons Heath is an average sized primary school serving a residential area in Colchester. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The school has a broadly average percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. There are a lower than average percentage of pupils from ethnic backgrounds.

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

The Christian values in the school are part of everything that the school does and are used by all members of the school community. The relationships in the school are based around these values resulting in exceptional care and guidance. The worship is innovative and very inclusive.

Established strengths

- The innovative use of worship in the school to engage and include all learners
- The strong and very evident Christian values of the school that permeate into all areas.
- The way that pupils from all back grounds are welcomed and enriched at the school

Focus for development

- To use the data collected from the thorough monitoring to add even more challenge to the school.

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

There is a clear Christian vision that is articulated by all and applied across the school. This means that pupils are able to confidently articulate this vision and the values which underpin it. They see Jesus as a role model against whom they can bench mark their own lives. The Christian character is also very evident in the building, displays, documentation and, most importantly, the way the staff and pupils treat each other. Pupils all said they felt safe and very well cared for. This is reflected in attendance in the school which is above the national average. The children enjoy their RE lessons and these make a significant contribution to the character of the school with well planned work that enhances the social, moral spiritual and particularly the cultural development of the pupils. In one of the lessons observed the pupils were looking at Hindu artefacts that a pupil had brought in. The lesson concluded with the pupil demonstrating the significance of the artefacts to the class, enabling her to share her faith with others in a tangible way. The wellbeing of learners is paramount and this is evident from the positive comments that the pupils and parents made. They knew who to talk to if they had problems and named a range of staff that help them. The pupils reported that the nurture room was important to the school when people needed extra help. They also recognise the need to help others and collect for a number of charities both in this country and abroad. The pupils particularly liked the shoe box appeal so that they can bring happiness to others at Christmas. The pupils recognise all that they have got and genuinely seemed grateful. There are a huge range of clubs running at the school and pupils from all ages spoke passionately about them, particularly the choirs. The parents are very positive about the behaviour in the school and this was also evident from touring the school. The behaviour system is based around positive reinforcement and uses the Christian values as a base. The parents really like the fact that positive behaviour is celebrated with house points and stars. The school's has a strong sense of spirituality and this is based around a whole school

definition which is Spirituality as an ability to connect with something other than yourself. This was recently written after whole school training was undertaken to develop their own understanding. The pupil's spirituality is enhanced through music, art, silence and prayer as well as the use of the schools grounds with quiet reflective areas being central to this.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The worship in the school is both innovative and very effective in driving forward the pupils' understanding of the schools core Christian values. The school uses a variety of styles for delivering worship from class based, worship run by the pupils, whole school, where they work in groups, celebration, singing, to clergy run worship. The pupils like this variety and all were able to talk about their favourite types.

The main Christian festivals are celebrated in school where the church comes to them. Parents really enjoy worshiping in the school and one commented that it really enhanced the community feel for the school. The worship is based around Bible stories and as a result the pupils recognise many stories and why they are relevant to their lives. One pupil commented, "It tells us about Jesus and shows us how we can live our lives better". Because of the variety of opportunities presented in worship, pupils recognised many features and Christian traditions and could name artefacts and recite a number of Christian prayers. They also understood the importance of Eucharist as they had had one in the school this year.

Two acts of worship were observed; one a whole school and one a class based act run solely by the pupils. The whole school worship started with a gathering where the pupils enthusiastically sang the Lords Prayer. They entered and exited in a respectful manner. The worship was Christian in character and used Biblical stories to deepen the understanding of the school core values. Artwork was used in a way that deepened the pupils' spirituality as they had to reflect on the story through art they had pre-prepared. During the quiet reflective stage of the worship the leader asked the pupils to think how the story would affect them and what they could learn from it to help their school. A pupil commented that they like the quiet time as it allows them to think and be calm. The worship is very inclusive and involves a number of people from different backgrounds. A pupil said that although she was not really religious she likes assemblies and feels part of them because she loves the singing and the values help her. The importance placed on prayer has an impact on pupils and makes a considerable contribution to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The pupils understood the value of personal prayer and could talk about the different elements that made up prayer. Prayer comes naturally to the pupils and as part of worship they just stood up and led prayers that they felt were right to say. One pupil explained that they pray to talk to God and this helps them not only when they are worried but also when they are happy.

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

The leadership of the school confidently articulate, live out and promote a vision for the school that are rooted in 6 distinctively Christian Values-belonging, trust, respect, friendship, compassion and endurance. The leadership work tirelessly to enable the children have a real feeling of self worth which is reflected in the confident way they approach their work. The key issue from the last inspection has been addressed as the pupils are now very actively involved in a variety of styles of worship. The vision of the school allows pupils to take chances and not worry if they make mistakes; this allows them to challenge themselves. Is the leadership of RE given a high priority or are staff given good support in fulfilling their role? The teaching of religious education (RE) observed was never less than good and has resulted in achievement in RE being in line with the results for mathematics which in turn are well above the national average at 95%. The parents feel that the leadership team of the school is approachable and that any issues are always dealt with quickly and fairly. Special mention was made of the buddy system that operates in the school as the parents felt it was a fantastic way for the school to feel like a family. The school has the ability to deal with challenge as well as celebration and has sensitively supported families in crisis. An example of this is the beautiful stain glass window in the hall that was commissioned to celebrate the life of a longstanding member of the school community. The leadership of the school also has very effective strategies in place to ensure that pupils who come from diverse cultures are made to feel part of the school through special events such as black history month, astern uropean

day and Chinese celebrations. This is clearly a church school with strong values but as part of that it recognises, welcomes and nurtures all faiths. One boy was very proud that his dad had been able to come in to help with black history month. The school trains its staff well and has a strong relationship with the local diocese. The school also has very strong links with the local parish, working together to raise money, entertain residents and run worship from the school. This enables the children to have a wealth of opportunities to be part of a real community. It has a well established monitoring system that involves all levels of management as well as the governors of the school who regularly visit. This includes a clear monitoring timetable for RE giving the school accurate data which it used to enhance learning. All this monitoring now needs to be even more fine-tuned so that evidence of its impact can be clearly shown.

SIAMS report July 2013 Parsons Heath Templewood Road Colchester CO4 3EZ