



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School

Frensham Road

Frensham, Surrey GU10 3DS

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: 9 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 17 November 2010

School's unique reference number: 125183

Headteacher: Jennifer Downing

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

St Mary's is smaller than the average size infant school with 90 pupils on roll, arranged in three class groups. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The majority are from a white British heritage. The socio-economic background of pupils is largely favourable. Attendance is above national averages. The headteacher was appointed in April 2015 and three new staff have also joined the school since then. The leader for religious education is one of the recent appointments.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are good

- A harmonious and supportive environment provides opportunities for children to openly discuss their thoughts and ideas about matters of faith and belief.
- Acts of worship make a significant contribution to the children's understanding of Bible stories and how Christian values help them in their daily lives.
- The headteacher, fully supported by leaders and managers, is developing the distinctive Christian ethos so that it becomes central to all aspects of school life.

Areas to improve

- Develop pupils' skills in reflecting that enhance their learning and spiritual development.
- Develop the use of questions in collective worship to deepen the pupils' understanding of the messages they hear.
- Raise the level of challenge in learning outcomes to improve the quality of teaching and learning in religious education (RE).

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

Six core values are firmly established as the central expression of the school's Christian ethos. Respect, love, forgiveness, fairness, honesty and humility are familiar to pupils and adults in the school community and are promoted through collective worship, moral and social development and the way the school manages behaviour. Together, they make a significant impact on the quality of the learning particularly through high quality relationships at all levels between children and adults. They also help to establish positive attitudes which contribute to success in academic attainment which is at least consistently good. Pupils treat each other with respect regardless of background and consequently relationships are strongly based on kindness and an awareness of others. Religious education also makes an important contribution to the development of moral and social development through opportunities to discuss issues based on faith and belief. Pupils enjoy these times and respond with eagerness and enthusiasm. Cultural appreciation is also fostered by the study of world faiths in RE where they learn to respect others. Pupils and parents, say that learning about other faiths and cultures is an essential aspect of their education. The school is developing its understanding of spirituality and provides times for pupils to reflect. Ways of reflecting provided need to link directly to improving their learning and spiritual development. Pupils say that they are happy in school and make good friends. They enjoy their learning and the relationships they have with friends and adults.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Acts of worship are outstanding because carefully delivered messages are easily accessible to pupils who consequently relate well to them because they have relevance to their own lives. At the same time, they are interactive and great fun! There are fewer opportunities for pupils to continue to explore these messages in depth beyond the actual worship time. Planning for worship has a thorough structure that places values firmly at the centre of themes which are rooted in Bible stories. Themes based on values such as fairness and forgiveness relate to the pupils' own experiences both within school and in the outside world. Pupils say that they learn about God and Jesus which helps them to be better persons. Acts of worship provide times for children to think about faith and what it means to them. They are for example exploring their understanding of the nature of the Trinity. Pupils talk about God and Jesus both 'being alive in heaven' but also in their 'hearts at the same time'. How that happens, they don't know, but they are sure that His Spirit protects them. They say that 'God talks to us in our hearts so that you know the right thing to do'. These comments reflect the pupils' ability to reflect on what they learn in worship and make sense of it. In a similar way pupils are developing their appreciation of the purpose of prayer. They know that it is a way to talk with God to ask for help, say sorry or thank you. Collective worship is distinctively Christian in nature with signs and symbols that reflect Anglican tradition. Pupils understand the reason for lighting a candle and the significance of the cross. They respond with enthusiasm and willingly participate when asked. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

Standards in RE are consistently good and pupils make good progress to attain levels that are at least in line with national expectations. Pupils make very good progress in acquiring knowledge about Christianity and other world religions. They have a secure grasp of the key aspects of the religions studied. Pupils apply this knowledge in their lessons to learn from their studies. This aspect of RE, to apply their learning, has not as yet been given as much emphasis as knowledge and according to the school's assessments, pupils don't achieve as high a level in this aspect. The school is aware of this through careful monitoring. The recent Diocesan Guidelines which provide greater opportunities for pupils to explore their learning through enquiry at a deeper level. This has not yet been fully explored by the school particularly in how questioning can challenge the pupils to a greater extent. Teaching is strong and confident.

Pupils respond with enthusiasm and an eagerness to engage in discussion and share their thoughts. The best learning happens when pupils become animated because they have been given opportunity to explore a question that excites them. The school is trialling a new form of assessment that matches other core subjects. This is still at an early stage and moderation of pupils' work has not yet been undertaken to ensure the accuracy of teacher judgements. The RE leader is committed to the subject and ensures that it has a high profile in the curriculum. She has a good grasp of the subject and what needs to be done to continue to take it forward. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE.

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

The headteacher has made a very good start in revisiting the six core values that were chosen at the time of the last inspection. With a relatively new staff, the time is right to look at them again so that there is a shared understanding of what they mean to the school as a church school. This process has begun with staff meetings to explore how values can be promoted through the curriculum and in developing a shared understanding of spirituality. This work is still at a relatively early stage but the headteacher, fully supported by governors, is clear about how to proceed in developing the distinctive Christian ethos. To this end, their self-evaluation is realistic and shows a good capacity to continue to improve as a church school. The school has in many ways improved since the previous inspection, particularly relating to the impact of collective worship. Governors have undertaken some effective monitoring of RE and collective worship which has given them a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the overall impact of the Christian ethos on all aspects of school life are less well developed. The vicar makes an important contribution to the life of the school and is a familiar member of the school community. She regularly leads acts of worship and welcomes children to the church to celebrate services such as Easter and Christmas. The commitment of the 'Open the Book' team to worship is an indication of the strength of the links between school and church. Children and parents comment very favourably about the difference 'Open the Book' makes to the children's knowledge of Bible stories. Parents say that their children come home and talk about the values and link them to Bible stories. They say that the school's approach to its Christian ethos makes it very accessible to their children and themselves because it helps to develop a moral sense.

SIAMS report March 2016 St Mary's CE VA Infant School Frensham GU10 3DS