



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 Primary School

Petworth Road, Chiddingfold, Surrey GU8 4UF

Previous SIAS grade: Satisfactory

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: 11 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 24 January 2013

School's unique reference number: 140026

Headteacher: Janis Radcliffe

Inspector's name and number: Marcia Headon 761

School context

St Mary's Church of England Primary School is an average-sized school with 178 pupils aged 4-11. It became an academy as part of the Good Shepherd Trust in November 2013. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is very low. The proportion with special educational needs and physical disabilities is below national averages, and the number of disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding is also lower than the national average. The headteacher was appointed in February 2014.

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

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher ensures that the school values all pupils recognising them as individuals 'precious to God'.
- The strong support of the Rector significantly enhances the school as a Christian community.
- The revised curriculum with built-in time for reflection ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the connection between the school's values and Christian teaching is made more evident to pupils, so that the Christian distinctiveness of the school becomes much more apparent.
- Develop the evaluation of collective worship, extending this to include pupils and staff and ensuring it is focused upon measuring the impact.
- Embed the new Diocesan Religious Education (RE) syllabus and ensure that the assessment of pupils' work is rigorous and accurate.

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

St Mary's is a harmonious and happy school. It is driven by a large number of values which are prominently displayed throughout the buildings. The pupils are able to explain how some of these values affect them, as they talk of the importance of perseverance in their work and how friendship and love are important to them. They are rightly rewarded in the end of week celebration worship for demonstrating these values in their own lives. However, pupils are not aware that some of these are Christian values, rooted in the teachings of Jesus and that, as a church school, Christian core values are fundamental to its ethos. The staff model the values well and as one member of staff reported, 'I knew the first time I set foot in this school, the values influenced its work and I wanted to be here'. The school is highly inclusive, and based on the principle that all are children of God with unique talents, pupils are given strong support. They did not achieve as well as nationally in the phonics test at the end of Year 1, but by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015, attainment exceeded national averages in all subjects. A similarly strong picture was true in Key Stage 2 with the exception of mathematics which was below national averages. Current data however shows the Year 6 cohort are making good progress. The gap between the attainment and progress of different groups, including the most vulnerable, is closing. Pupil behaviour is good. They are welcoming and polite and show huge generosity of spirit to one another, supporting and encouraging these who find school more of a challenge. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is recognised as being of high importance and the provision for this is outstanding. It is strongly influenced by the values. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect both in worship and throughout the curriculum and the development of philosophy and thinking skills has fostered this. Relationships are also very strong and there is a huge sense of being part of a community. The pupils are very aware of the importance of tolerance and show a high degree of respect for others of different faiths or no faith. They support charities overseas such as School in a Bag and wish to help others less fortunate than themselves. However, they are less aware of the role of the Christian church nationally or overseas. Religious Education (RE) plays a significant role in developing pupils spiritually and morally, by them being encouraged to discuss questions of faith and meaning. Work in books shows this clearly.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is obviously an important time of the day for pupils as many spoke of the opportunity to reflect and share. It is well planned by the school in conjunction with the Rector and is centred on the school values as well as the liturgical year. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship. A quiet atmosphere with a lit candle and music, greets pupils as they enter the hall and they show respect and reverence. Music plays an important part and the pupils sing hymns with obvious enjoyment. Worship is led by the headteacher, Rector, Roman Catholic and Baptist ministers which gives a rich variety of approaches and styles. Pupils particularly enjoy 'Open the Book' and being asked to participate. They remembered the Rector's portrayal of the 'Lost Sheep'. Bible stories or a story about the value of the week, an essential part of collective worship, give pupils a strong Christian message. Pupils enjoy attending services in the church at Harvest, Christmas and Easter and the whole community is brought together by these services as they are very well attended by parents. The local Church community also helps with developing the religious significance of special times in the year by having run an Easter story tableau and a very poignant First World War remembrance event which was visited by all the classes. This shows that worship in the school effectively contributes to pupils' developing knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, irrespective of their own, or their family's faith position. An annual communion service held at school also widens pupils understanding of Christian liturgy. Nevertheless, pupils' understanding of the Trinity is not well developed. Pupils are involved in planning and leading class worship and by reading prayers in whole school worship which they have written. Pupils understand the value of prayer and know the Lord's Prayer. However, there is a variety

of approaches to the use of the prayer spaces in the classrooms and some are not well used. The school is redesigning its outdoor prayer space which pupils view as important not just to the school, but to the whole community as it commemorates a past pupil and governor. Currently there is little evaluation of the impact of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The new Religious Education Diocesan Guidelines have recently been introduced and the development of this, together with accurate assessment of pupils' work, is at an early stage. Teaching in RE is good. Teachers make lessons engaging and pupils clearly enjoy the variety of topics and the questions posed. In a Year 6 class, pupils were enthusiastically debating the pros and cons of forgiveness and considering challenging dilemmas such as how difficult it is to forgive someone if they injure someone dear to you. A Reception class, exploring the wonders of new life, were thoroughly engrossed in identifying sounds which new born animals make. Pupils' spiritual development was enhanced by looking at pictures of spring flowers, blossom and the wonders of nature. The teaching of Bible stories is developing well pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the life and teachings of Jesus. The new focus on questions of faith and what pupils can learn from this, is also encouraging deeper thinking. For example, when considering the meaning of the lines in the Lord's Prayer 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done', one pupil pondered whether the world would be a better place if people did not show off! Currently, written work in RE is not always sufficiently detailed or extended and links are not always made across religions. Marking is thorough but feedback is sometimes brief, but pupils increasingly respond to their teachers' questions in books. There is good teaching of other religions and the school meets the National Society's Statement of Entitlement for RE. The interim RE leader is working very hard and is well supported by the Rector and the Diocese. The headteacher monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching and learning in RE. Recently the school has begun to report to parents on progress in RE, but there has been no moderation of this with other schools. There is a current RE action plan but this is not sufficiently detailed. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision that she wishes all children to lead happy and fulfilled lives and that through school they will be well-placed to perpetuate all that is worthwhile in the service of God. She lives out the values of the school at all times, is highly respected and models strong Christian values. She is well supported by the leadership team and through a revised curriculum they have enhanced the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's self-evaluation is very accurate and the processes by which their judgements are reached are very robust. Parents are surveyed frequently and express high levels of confidence in the leadership of the school. The development plans for the school include the development of the Christian distinctiveness. The governors are highly supportive of the school and very conscientious in their duties. The Rector is a particular strength. She is a very frequent visitor and provides informed support for collective worship and RE. She has been very conscientious in her determination to inform herself what is the best Christian education for pupils, by attending Diocesan courses with the RE coordinator. Partnership working with the local church is very strong. Recently, as part of its self-evaluation, the school has audited its links with the parish church. This demonstrates the strength of this. The school contributes regularly to the parish magazine and until recently the church youth worker ran a lunchtime club which was very well supported by the pupils. Pupils' work is displayed in church and regular prayers are said for the school. Other churches in the village also support the school well. The school is part of the community and as one parent commented 'the school is the core of the village'.