



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Valley End Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Highams Lane  
Valley End  
Chobham  
Surrey GU24 6TB

**Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding**

**Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Guildford**

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: 13 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 10 September 2009

School's unique reference number: 125140

Headteacher: Richard Mead

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

#### School context

Valley End is a smaller than average size infant school with 168 children on roll. It is situated in a rural setting. Most children are of white British heritage and from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number entitled to receive the pupil premium is also below the national average. Attendance is above national expectations. The headteacher has been in post since January 2015.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Valley End as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Pupils understand that the Christian ethos is based on God's love and care for them.
- Explicitly Christian acts of worship make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal and spiritual development.
- The leaders and managers' strong commitment to the promotion of the Christian ethos means that it is continually developing.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop spirituality across the curriculum by providing more opportunities for pupils to reflect in depth.
- Ensure that there is consistency across the curriculum in the quality of questioning that challenges pupils' understanding and appreciation of questions of meaning and purpose.
- Involve pupils to a greater extent in leading the way that worship themes are explored in the classroom.

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

The introduction of the golden rules in January has provided a framework for the school to express its distinctive Christian character in a more explicit way that has greater meaning for pupils. These rules have become embedded in the life of the school through the high quality of relationships between pupils and adults and the contribution they make to the pupil's personal development. Pupils refer to love and care, honesty and truthfulness and looking after God's world as part of their everyday conversation when sharing thoughts about what makes the school special to them. These values underpin the school's approach to behaviour with an emphasis on forgiveness and the need to treat each other with 'the love that Jesus showed us', and are becoming increasingly embedded as part of the curriculum. Opportunities have been identified in the pupils' learning to explore the Christian values that underpin the golden rules. For example, children in the early years have been using the story of Noah to help understand their topic work and links to God's creation as part of their learning about growing beans. Religious education (RE) makes a significant contribution to the pupils' social, moral, spiritual, and cultural (SMSC) education. Topics about 'belonging' and 'special places' aid pupils' social development through their emphasis on community and appreciation of other faiths and cultures. Pupils respond with respect and a willingness to appreciate differences in beliefs. There are good opportunities for them to explore abstract concepts and develop their spirituality although these have not yet been explored in depth across the whole curriculum. There are some very good examples of pupils responding to questions that explore their understanding but these opportunities are not consistently challenging throughout the school. Parents feel that the school approaches the promotion of the Christian ethos in a way that is accessible to their children and encourages them to ask questions and explore what faith and belief means. Pupils discuss these concepts with confidence and a willingness to appreciate the views of others. In particular, parents say that the school reinforces through the golden rules values that help to make their children 'good human beings'.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Acts of worship are outstanding because explicitly Christian themes make a significant impact to the pupil's growing understanding of faith and belief, and emphasise the importance of Christian values to their moral development and a sense of fairness of what is right. Pupils have a strong understanding of the place of Bible teaching as a central aspect of collective worship and how stories they hear about Jesus help them to 'be a better person'. Links between explicitly Christian themes and social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL), as well as topics from RE, help them to understand that lessons they hear in acts of worship have relevance to their everyday lives both within school and beyond. The delivery of worship has been improved by establishing an agreed format that ensures consistency across the school. Monitoring by the headteacher and governors confirms that time for prayer and reflection, singing and learning from Bible stories are elements of every act of worship. The weekly class-based acts of worship have become more meaningful as they give time for pupils to take some ownership. This is an aspect that has not yet been fully explored particularly with regard to equipping pupils with the skills to have a greater say in how themes are explored in more depth. Pupils do, however, have many opportunities to lead aspects of worship such as prayer. They have a mature understanding of the purpose of prayer and have the confidence to ask searching questions such as, 'how does God answer all of our prayers at the same time?' The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to explore their understanding of the nature of the Trinity. They know that God, Son and Holy Spirit are three aspects of one being and have the curiosity to try and understand how this can be. There are very good systems in place to monitor collective worship that involve pupils through the school council and the governors, as well as evaluations by members of staff.

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

The headteacher has made an excellent start by strengthening the way that the school community articulates a distinct Christian vision that has meaning and purpose for the development of the pupils' academic success and wellbeing. He has ensured that the golden rules are overtly Christian in nature and that this is understood by pupils and adults in school. The headteacher has a very good grasp of how this can be further embedded throughout the school by giving pupils greater responsibility for how Christian values are explored in acts of worship and throughout the curriculum. He is fully supported by members of staff in their commitment to the ongoing development of the Christian ethos particularly as they witness the impact that it makes to the lives of pupils. Governors ensure that they continually evaluate its effectiveness as a church school by gathering feedback from a range of stake holders. They have accurately evaluated the impact of the Christian ethos and share the headteacher's vision of placing children at the centre of all decisions made. Actions for further improvement have been identified and are an integral part of the overall school improvement plan. The leadership and management have a very good capacity to continue to develop the school as a church school. Links with local church communities are strong. The parish church, adjacent to the school, is seen by pupils and their parents as an important part of the life of the school. The celebrations of major Christian festivals, as well as other services, are integral aspects of the way the school expresses its Christian ethos. The vicar is a well-known member of the school community and regularly leads acts of collective worship both in school and when held in church. The headteacher and vicar have extended links to other local Christian communities and invited other clergy to lead collective worship. The school has effectively addressed the areas for development from the previous report.

The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report July 2015 Valley End CE VC Infant School Chobham GU24 6TB