



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 Aided Primary School

Church Lane, Chessington, Surrey KT9 2DH

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Dates of inspection: 24 February 2015

Date of last inspection: February 2010

School's unique reference number: 102593

Headteacher: Linda Rainbow

Inspector's name and number: Glyn Willoughby 637

School context

St Mary's is an oversubscribed, larger than average primary school serving the local urban community. The large majority of pupils are of a white British heritage and the proportion triggering additional government funding or with different levels of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also broadly average.

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

- The vision and commitment of the headteacher, the deputy, well supported by vicar and governors, in embedding distinctive Christian values that permeate the life of the school with evident impact on the academic achievement, personal development and well-being of all pupils.
- Excellent relationships, informed by Christian values and cultivated by nurturing staff, which inspire pupils to thrive in their personal development and develop as trusting and compassionate young people.
- The clear Christian vision and passion of the vicar in enriching the strong partnership between church and school communities.
- The impact of the creative collective worship and religious education programmes upon pupils' spiritual growth and academic progress.

Areas to improve

- Review the monitoring and evaluation of spiritual development and its links with distinctive Christian values across all areas of the curriculum, to further identify how spirituality impacts upon school life.
- Embed a self-evaluation programme involving the entire school community in measuring the impact of the Christian ethos on personal development, academic achievement and well-being of all pupils.

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

This is a safe, caring Christian community that fulfils its mission statement by enabling pupils of all abilities and needs to develop their potential in partnership with their families. Explicit Christian values lie at the heart of every aspect of school life creating a nurturing ethos in which pupils make sustained and at least good academic progress across the school.

Since the last inspection the Christian values have been reviewed and affirmed. They are taught through a creative curriculum, including drama and art, that links closely with collective worship and religious education (RE) and have a significant impact upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Worship and RE also play a major role in establishing the school's Christian character, as the teaching of Christian values provides a spiritual vocabulary giving the opportunity to explore 'big' questions and deepen thinking. The school plans to review the monitoring and evaluation of spiritual development and its links with all areas of the curriculum to further identify how spirituality impacts upon school life.

Pupils are able to identify the values, link with relevant Bible stories and readily explain the impact they have on their personal lives. They describe how Christian values, such as Trust, combined with 'caring and understanding' staff, give them confidence to 'work together and progress, even if we are stuck!' Every pupil is valued and staff passionately believe in the importance of finding sensitive ways to provide individual help for those who require additional support. In this secure and happy environment, characterised by trusting relationships, pupils enjoy coming to school and feel motivated to learn and, as shown by charity collections, to support others. Any differences of opinion are effectively resolved with an emphasis on reconciliation and forgiveness.

Celebration of festivals from Christianity, Judaism and other faiths such as Chinese New Year, provide pupils with a growing understanding of and respect for diversity and difference, both within the church and other faith communities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is an inspiring part of school life and has a significant impact upon pupils' spiritual and moral growth and how they develop as caring young people. Pupils can readily explain its importance to them and how it allows them to 'feel we are a family community'. They have a high regard for worship, appreciating the importance of each occasion and particularly looking forward to the weekly 'Open the Book' worship in which volunteers from the church act Bible stories. As well as developing a growing familiarity with the church, these sessions portray stories in a realistic way that stimulate pupils to feel they 'are in the story'.

The worship programme, based upon the Christian calendar, underpins the school's Christian ethos because it is linked to core values and allows pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding as each value is explored. A strong focus on Jesus Christ enables pupils to relate the values seen in his life to, as the vicar says, 'those values he would want to see in our lives'. Pupils readily link the Bible stories to the school's core values and can explain their meaning for them personally. The vicar's regular involvement in planning and leading worship affirms the strong sense of trust and respect between church and school that has embedded a calm, secure environment enabling pupils to grow spiritually. The attendance of all staff also demonstrates the importance of the occasion. In the worship observed, led by the vicar, pupils were fully engaged, keen to listen and to take part. Enthusiastic singing and rapt attention demonstrated the value of the occasion for pupils, their high regard for the importance of prayer and the time for reflection. Visits to the church, including to celebrate Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas, result in pupils gaining an understanding of church tradition and practice as well as God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Monitoring and evaluation includes systematic feedback from pupils whose comments are then built into refining the programme.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards achieved in religious education (RE) are in line with and often above the standards achieved in other core subjects that are above the national average. Pupils of all abilities, including those with additional educational needs, make good and sustained progress.

The experienced subject leaders and staff team have developed a robust system to monitor and track assessment data in order to inform planning and progress which addressed an action point from the previous inspection. Pupils' thinking skills are deepened through the personalised marking policy with teachers adding questions to encourage further thought and reflection. In lessons, pupils respond to the developmental marking by listening and raising relevant issues, ensuring everyone is an active rather than a passive learner.

The quality of teaching observed was very good and at times outstanding. Staff demonstrate excellent subject knowledge by providing activities that stimulate spiritual growth and creative thinking in a nurturing environment. The high quality of teaching results in pupils' enjoyment of the subject. Staff know pupils extremely well and have a strong understanding of progress.

In Reception, children prepared bread as they learned about the story of Jesus and the loaves and fishes, demonstrating how RE makes a valuable contribution to developing a Christian understanding about values. Pupils in a high quality Year 6 lesson explored ideas with confidence as they studied a picture from a Bible story showing a group of people and a man being helped by Jesus. Skilful facilitation by staff enabled pupils to explore creatively, including drama, the meaning, personal feelings and emotions evoked by the picture and to listen with respect to the views of others. This provided evidence of pupils' outstanding spiritual development as they progress through the school.

The skills developed in RE enhance opportunities for spiritual and moral development in other subjects across the school curriculum. Pupils' knowledge is continually enriched as a result of Biblical story teaching within collective worship.

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

The inclusive and compassionate leadership of the headteacher and deputy, have ensured the school promotes a vision based upon distinctive Christian values that permeates the life of the school. Leadership is strong because it is rooted in partnership with the church and Diocese and fully supported by an empowered and enthusiastic staff team who are outstanding role models, providing inspiration for the high expectations in behaviour, care and respect for each other. This creates a family environment in which everyone feels valued, relationships are excellent and impact positively upon spiritual development and academic achievement. Parents feel able to contribute fully to school life because they are 'welcomed' and 'as much a part of the school as the children'.

Governors are very supportive of the commitment shown by the staff team. They have a thorough understanding of the strengths of the school and the need for continual review and improvement. Their commitment to sustain the distinctive Christian ethos when appointing staff demonstrates their understanding of future needs. Formal and informal monitoring and self-evaluation involve pupils and all groups in the school community, informing development planning. The school now plans to embed the self-evaluation programme by involving the school community in measuring the impact of the Christian ethos on personal development, academic achievement and well-being of all pupils.

The highly respected vicar has been instrumental in further strengthening the partnership between church and school and, through collaborative working, extending the programme of community activities. The worship programme has been enriched and pupils gain spiritually by the involvement of a team of story tellers from the community. This has addressed a focus from the previous inspection and with school involvement in monthly church services, has also helped pupils gain an understanding of being part of the wider parish family.

The leadership of RE and worship has resulted in effective practice and a stimulating curriculum informed by Christian values that motivates learning and achievement.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.

SIAMS report, February 2015. St Mary's Church of England Primary, Church Lane, Chessington, KT9 2DH.