



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 (VC) Primary School

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Dates of inspection: 13 September 2015

Date of last inspection: 21 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 113757

Headteacher: Helen Farmer

Inspector's name and number: Marcia Headon 761

School context

St Mary's Primary School is a smaller-than-average sized primary school with 176 pupils aged from 4 to 11. The majority of pupils come from the town and two major estates in Bridport and are of white British heritage. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding known as the pupil premium is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and or physical disabilities is also above national averages. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed.

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

- The outstanding leadership and role-model of Christian love and care for all pupils by the headteacher, inspires the day to day work of the school.
- The deeply embedded and understood values and belief system of the school permeate all of its work and guide the pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- The growing partnerships with the local clergy have a significant impact upon the pupils and the school.

Areas to improve

- Develop the regular involvement of more pupils in planning and leading aspects of collective worship.
- Embed the use of simple forms of liturgy in collective worship.
- Extend the work of the governors to include an evaluation of the distinctiveness of the school as a church school.
- Ensure that pupils develop a greater understanding of the role of the Anglican Church worldwide.

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

Christian values, which were chosen by the pupils and expressed in language to which they relate, are fundamental to the work of the school. Pupils of all ages have a clear understanding of how the values influence their lives. The belief that 'we will be helpful' was said by children to be important because that was the teaching of Jesus and they should follow that. Values of compassion, trust, honesty and respect are equally acted upon by the pupils and they can easily explain the basis for these in Biblical stories from both Old and New Testament. The Christian ethos of the school totally pervades its highly inclusive nature. The great majority of pupils make good or better progress from their starting points, which are often very low, and their academic needs are very well catered for. In the 2015 Key Stage 2 SATs, pupils have achieved better results than others nationally in reading and writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar. All pupils in this year group have made better progress than others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Living out its Christian mission and beliefs, the school has provided exceptional care for children who are disadvantaged and has developed innovative ways to overcome barriers to learning through its use of 'The Den'. This has had a significant effect upon results and the gap between those children in receipt of pupil premium and those who do not is now small and in some subjects does not exist. The care and support given is beyond what might be expected and parents speak of the social cohesion which is fostered through the school's Christian values. Relationships within the school are excellent and staff not only care for children but for one another's welfare, supporting when in difficulty and sharing achievements. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. Diaries of reflection are used well and their use is constantly being reviewed to ensure they adequately encourage pupils to think deeply. In numerous spaces in the school pupils are given the opportunity to write reflections on a range of issues including their own faith as well as God given wonders. The school is a harmonious and joyful place to be; behaviour is good with policies and classroom charters modelled around the beliefs of the school. Attendance has improved demonstrably showing the enjoyment and security which children gain from the school and the Christian value of trust is evident in the way they come to school and often share their anxieties knowing they will be listened to and help given. Pupils show respect for others, including those of other faiths and none and have a good awareness of the needs of the wider world. On the day of the inspection they were suggesting ways in which they could raise money for refugee children. They also provide support for a variety of charities such as a local food bank, cancer charities and 'Change for Change'. However, they have a lesser understanding of the work of the Anglican church worldwide. Religious Education (RE) is well planned and constantly evolving. A new scheme of assessment which enables teachers to more accurately pinpoint progress is just being introduced. The pupils like their RE lessons, which enable them not only to learn about Christianity and other faiths but also to consider issues, such as which features are most important in their relationship with God.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils value collective worship with many saying that it was the thing they liked most about the school as they were all together at that point and enjoyed the Bible stories. They reported that they often thought about the messages from collective acts of worship during the day. They enjoy the varying types of collective worship such as those with a focus on singing, and those led by the variety of clergy who come in weekly. Pupils are particularly enthused and influenced by the acts of worship led by the local team vicar with his puppet Minty the Sheep. Worship is carefully planned by the headteacher in conjunction with the clergy, using 'Roots and Fruits' as a basis but encompassing the school's values and Christian calendar into the themes. Whole school worship is enhanced by music and pupils clearly enjoy singing songs. They respond well to the stories which are made relevant to their lives, listen carefully to the Bible readings and join in with prayers. On the day of the inspection children in collective

worship watched slides about refugees and the work of the UN, and enthusiastically joined in placing articles in a mock tent for all types of refugees and joined in prayer for their relief. However, there is limited use of any form of liturgy in any of the collective acts of worship. Children are not used to giving responses in any form except 'Amen'. Collective acts of worship have a positive impact on the lives of the pupils. A pupil vividly remembered an act of worship about the importance of new beginnings and related this to being able to make a mistake, be forgiven and learn from this. Pupils consider the links with the local church to be important and appreciate the collective acts of worship which happen at St Mary's church at Christian festival times like Harvest, Christmas and Easter. These services are well attended by parents. However, although older pupils are involved in planning and leading collective worship at services in the church and other children are asked to participate in parts of collective worship in school, younger pupils are not regularly involved in helping to plan or lead parts of the collective acts of worship. Older pupils have just begun to explore the nature of the Trinity but younger pupils are not really aware of the idea of the Trinity. The school realises this. The school evaluates the impact of collective worship regularly, asking pupils and staff to comment. It has acted upon the findings. The Foundation Governors conducted an evaluation among the parents who attended services in the Church. Parents asked for more lyrics to be available to enable them to join in with singing and this was provided.

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

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership of a church school. She is sustained by her own strong beliefs that the school through its Christian values has a duty to help children feel safe, flourish and to believe in themselves. She shows the utmost concern and compassion for those children who are disadvantaged. She is an excellent role model for all pupils and the staff in all she does. She lives out her view that 'God's children deserve the best we can give them in this locality'. In this she is very ably supported by her deputy. The staff appreciate the work of the headteacher and support her well. The curriculum is broad and balanced and carefully planned to give opportunities which develop the whole child. The school website is very comprehensive, fully illustrates the Christian nature of the school and is updated regularly with events and activities. The school monitors the work of its pupils carefully and in its self-evaluation shows a largely accurate picture of its own strengths and areas for development. The Foundation Governors are very effective and eager to develop the school. They are constantly extending their understanding of the school, are regular visitors and take their role seriously, regularly attending training sessions. They have addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection through their own action plan and contribute well to the school improvement plan. They have not yet carried out a full evaluation of the effectiveness of the distinctiveness of the school as a church school but plan to do so shortly. The headteacher takes staff professional development very seriously and is preparing them for leadership at different levels in church schools. She values their contributions and encourages them, sending them on training or passing on training which she has received. The school has good links with the Diocesan Board of Education and appreciates their support. Links with the local churches have strengthened over the years and there are now close working relationships which are constantly evolving. As well as using the local church buildings for school services, details of the progress of the school are included in the parish magazine. The Parochial Church Council receives regular updates. A school choir is just beginning which will have strong connections with the parish church. Parents are fully supportive of the school and value the support they are given. They regard highly the school's development of their children's beliefs and attitudes.

SIAMS report September 2015 St Mary's Bridport DT64QS