



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

### St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Brookpit Lane  
Clymping,  
Littlehampton  
BN17 5QU

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** Chichester

Local authority: West Sussex

Dates of inspection: 29 January 2016

Date of last inspection: November 2009

School's unique reference number: 126024

Headteacher: Janet Llewelyn

Inspector's name and number: Hilary Ferries 276

#### School context

St Mary's is a small rural school. The majority of pupils travel from nearby villages and the town of Littlehampton. Most pupils are of white British heritage. The school holds several awards, including Eco school and was awarded the Quality Mark for Religious Education (silver) last year. The school was judged as good by Ofsted in 2014.

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

- Strong Christian values permeate the life of the school and underpin the Christian ethos of care and the positive relationships between all members of the school community
- The opportunity for pupils to contribute to the development of the school as a church school through the 'deep thinkers' group
- Outstanding leadership and teaching of religious education (RE) leads to high standards, and progress
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development make a significant contribution to the Christian life of the school

#### Areas to improve

- Improve the overall effectiveness of self-evaluation by integrating the different aspects of evaluation into a more systematic approach that identifies future improvement of the school as a church school
- Reach out to the community, church and other schools locally to deepen relationships, share best practice and support partnership schools

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

The Christian values that pupils, staff and governors at St Mary's have selected to support the school vision are embedded in the life of the school. They are displayed in every classroom, used in collective worship and the curriculum and are the foundation for school policies. As a result, pupils know that their school is a Church of England School and can articulate the vision, the values and what makes their school special. They say that this leads to teachers 'going the extra mile' to help them and make learning fun. This results in good academic achievement for all groups of pupils. Pupils say that the headteacher and staff listen to their ideas about all aspects of the school as a church school. They explain how this has changed and developed the curriculum provision with such events as 'Decorating Day' which brings the community together to celebrate Christian festivals. This has contributed well to the outcomes for pupils, creates an exciting dynamic learning environment and reflects the breadth of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education development. The school garden, reflective areas in classrooms and the wide range of outdoor learning all contribute very well to the spiritual development of the pupils. Behaviour seen in the inspection was outstanding as all pupils were engaged in their learning. Parents interviewed talked about their children developing a 'strong moral compass' and a sense of right and wrong, which they believe comes from the Christian values. One pupil said, 'I know about God's rules, they are our rules in school'. The school has addressed the issues from the last inspection to include opportunities for learning about the multicultural nature of British society. This is evident in the planning across the curriculum, the displays in the school and through interviews with pupils who are knowledgeable and talk about the celebration of diversity and respect for all.

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

Governor and pupil evaluation, and everyone interviewed in the school during the inspection, confirmed the importance of collective worship to the school community. Clear themes based on explicit Christian values and the church year makes worship coherent for pupils. They see how themes develop across the week and talk about what they had learned from them. This pattern enables pupils of all ages to access worship at their level and contributes well to the impact. This was demonstrated in the Year One and Two class worship session observed during the inspection, where pupils constructed a game based on the theme and then applied it to biblical teaching and application to life. Pupils from all age groups could articulate recent themes and relate them to their lives. The variety of Christian speakers, who relate very well to the pupils, bring an added dimension to worship and pupil evaluation reflects the impact of this worship. Visitors include the parish priest and another local minister. Parents enjoy the opportunities to join the school in worship, both at the school and at services held in the parish church and talk of the special place that worship has in the life of the school. A recent theme on the Trinity was well received and pupils from across the school were able to articulate God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer is also important to the school. Prayers are said at different times during the day and there are also opportunities to write prayers and pray quietly. Pupils interviewed could talk about what prayer meant to them – one said, 'It gets you in the habit of talking to God'. There are prayer books in classrooms and displayed around school which contribute to the school as a worshipping community. The headteacher, who is also the worship coordinator, ensures that worship is well planned. She has created a group called the 'deep thinkers', who evaluate collective worship and they have suggested changes to improve it. These include 'candle worship' where prayers are said by pupils and linked to the lighting of candles which has deepened the spiritual development for pupils. The written evaluations of pupils, supported by evidence collected during the inspection, reflects the impact of worship. One pupil wrote, 'it helps you to learn how God would like us to behave'. Governors attend and monitor worship regularly, and feedback at governing body meetings. As a result, governors know the

school well.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Teaching and learning in RE is outstanding. Teachers make the subject come alive using drama and art as well as technology, such as the class tablets. This means that pupils are engaged and positive about their learning and as a result standards and progress are above national expectations and in line with the other core subjects. The curriculum includes an appropriate balance of Christianity and other faiths. Pupils are knowledgeable and talk confidently about their learning and how religion and belief affects the way people live their lives. There is a good balance of learning about and learning from RE and pupils' work seen during the inspection showed that the subject makes a strong contribution to spiritual development. Progress in RE in all year groups is carefully monitored and discussed with pupils. The headteacher is the subject leader and she discusses progress that pupils make with the teachers. She ensures that all pupils, are encouraged to do their best and those pupils with a disadvantage do as well as their peers in RE. She has ensured that there is high quality professional development for staff, which has increased their confidence in teaching RE and contributes to the high quality. This has resulted in a RE Quality Mark silver award for the school.

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

Deeply rooted Christian values contribute strongly to the Christian ethos of the school and are articulated by leadership at all levels. Supported by an enthusiastic and able staff, the headteacher promotes the Christian vision of the school, including recognition of the uniqueness of every child and the belief all can succeed. Parents are positive about the pastoral care and support from staff for their children and many choose the school because of the Christian ethos. The school improvement plan is created by governors and staff at joint development days each year. The strategic plan is reviewed by all and new priorities discussed and agreed. Each year it includes a priority that focuses on an aspect of Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness based on the self-evaluation and the identified needs in this area. This keeps the Christian character under systematic review and the evaluations of previous plans show that it is continually improving and evolving. The impact of the plans from the previous two years, which were to broaden provision in collective worship to include visitors and to improve the quality of teaching and learning of RE can be seen in the positive evaluation from pupils about collective worship and the award of the RE Quality Mark. This year the school has identified reaching out to the local community, including developing stronger relationships with the church and local schools to share their excellent practice and learn from others. The school has positive relationship with the church. This is evident in a number of ways. The parish priest visits regularly to lead worship and provides pastoral support for families. There are links with members of the congregation who volunteer, reading with the children and supporting decorating days and this results in a strong, close-knit community with growing numbers of families attending family services in the church. There has been a range of self-evaluation carried out over the previous two years which has contributed to the development of the school as a church school. The voices of the pupils through the 'deep thinkers' has been very powerful and led to improvement. There have been monitoring visits from governors, but all of this has not been brought together in a systematic way. The recent introduction of an ethos committee is designed to address this balance and the members of the committee have already begun to pull together the different elements of monitoring and evaluation to support and challenge the school further to enable them to celebrate fully the success and to ensure the continuing development and improvement of the school as a church school.

SIAMS report January 2016, St Mary's CE Primary School, Clymping, BN17 5QU