



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St George's Beneficial Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hanover Street, Portsea

Portsmouth PO1 3BN

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Portsmouth

Local authority: Portsmouth

Dates of inspection: 3 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 17 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 16346

Headteacher: Sandra Gibb

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

St George's is an average size primary school with 296 children on roll. The school is situated in an urban area of high social deprivation. The constitution of the surrounding area has changed significantly in recent years. Although the majority of children are from a white British heritage, a third have English as an additional language. The number of children joining or leaving the school other than at normal times is high. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average as is the number entitled to receive the pupil premium. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. New school buildings, officially opened in April 2015, relaunched the school's vision.

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

- The school's Christian ethos underpins the nurture and support for children and their families.
- An inclusive Christian ethos ensures that all children are confident to openly express their views on faith and belief.
- The school's leaders and managers are committed to providing children with opportunities to succeed in their learning and develop their self-esteem.

Areas to improve

- Develop the children's language so that they can more clearly express their thoughts and ideas that reflect their spiritual awareness across all areas of the curriculum.
- Develop closer links between the school's mission statement, the core values and Bible teaching to enhance the worship experience and relevance of worship messages.
- Develop the quality of opportunities for reflection so that children have time and space to engage in reflection at a deeper level.

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

The relaunch of the school in April 2015 gave the whole school community the opportunity to refresh its vision. Four key aspects of a new mission statement were identified and these are becoming increasingly important to the children's learning and wellbeing. These four aspects, skills, goals, belief and success, are in turn being underpinned by 12 core values that have their roots in Biblical teaching. Children know that the four aspects are helping to drive their learning and personal development and are able to explain how they do so. They also explain how the four core values that they have so far been taught help them in their personal development and learning. Children also have some understanding how these values link to the four aspects of the mission statement. For example, they say that you need perseverance to succeed and courage when striving to achieve their goals. The children are still developing the language to support them in articulating a deeper appreciation of how values contribute to their success and to all of the four aspects of the mission statement. However, when given the opportunities to reflect, children do respond by thinking at a deeper level. Some children, for instance, explain that belief is central to all of the values and the mission statement because 'you need belief to do things' and 'without belief you wouldn't reach your goals'. Older children have a good understanding that success can come in many forms of which being happy is the most important. The children say that they are happy in school and have good friends. They say that teachers look after and care for them. The quality of pastoral care is excellent. A committed pastoral team ensure that the children's needs, and those of their families, are met. Children's lives have been transformed because of the impact of the interventions given. The school is developing its understanding of spirituality and how to create opportunities for it to be integral to the children's learning. There are several examples of good practice of this across the school but it has not been fully developed in all curriculum subjects in all year groups. An appreciation of other cultures and faiths is crucial to the harmony and quality of relationships that thrive in the school. Children are tolerant and respectful of each other's beliefs and backgrounds whether this is religious or not.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of worship at St George's have adapted so that they have relevance to all members of the school community regardless of background. At the same time, the school has ensured that collective worship is distinctively Christian whilst recognising that a significant number of children come from different faith traditions. The result is that worship is a distinct and special time when the school comes together to think about God and to learn how the messages they hear about God and Jesus can help them to lead better lives. Children are encouraged to think about their own beliefs when praying and listening to Bible stories. Children with no faith are similarly encouraged to reflect on what they have heard and apply it to their own lives. Collective worship is inclusive and children respond well to it. Since September 2015 there has been greater focus on teaching explicit values in worship. The impact of worship has improved because of the focus on the exploration of one value each half term. This has given greater opportunities to learn about values in more depth. An outcome of this is that children are acquiring a language through which they can explore what values mean to them at a more personal level. Links between values, the four aspects of the mission statement, Bible teaching and the children's own lives are still at a developmental stage. Acts of worship include explicitly Christian elements including the Lord's Prayer and the celebration of Christmas and Easter. The school encourages all children to join in these special times, either in school or at the parish church, but are respectful of parents' wishes should they not want their children to do so. Children have a good understanding of prayer. Younger children appreciate that there are different types of prayer when they can say please, thank you or sorry to God. Older children are developing their understanding of the place and purpose of prayer and how it can support and comfort in times of worry. Children have good opportunities to be involved in leading and planning worship.

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

The leadership and management ensure that the school's Christian ethos grows to meet the needs of a changing school community. They have worked well to develop an inclusive mission based on the school's Christian foundation which has meaning and purpose for all members of the school community. School leaders work hard to ensure that all members of the school community have opportunities to understand what being a Church of England school means and this has helped to reassure some families. The relaunch of the vision in 2015 provided a stimulus to look again at the ethos. The school is making good progress towards implementing a new mission statement which is increasingly being underpinned by core values. As governors recognise, it is too early to say how well this is making an impact on the children's learning and personal development overtime, but anecdotal evidence shows that children's attitudes are more positive as their understanding deepens. The headteacher has a good understanding of the contribution that an explicit Christian ethos can make to the children's learning and wellbeing and is using this to continue to develop the school as a church school. She is supported by key members of staff and governors and the leadership has a good capacity to continue to develop. Governors value the links with local churches and explain how this brings an added dimension to their work and indeed makes an impact to the quality of the governing body. For example, governors felt strongly that when meetings used to start with a prayer, this brought a clear message about the life of the school. They feel that this could be strengthened particularly through the involvement of members of the deanery in the life of the school. The vicar attends governing body meetings and leads some acts of worship and other members of the church are involved in the life of the school. Questionnaires show that the vast majority of parents are aware of the distinctive Christian character and are happy with how the school balances that with meeting the needs of all children. Parents spoken to say that their children like learning about a range of faiths and that they talk about them and the values at home. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report March 2016 St George's CE VC Primary School Portsea POI 3BN