



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Christ Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary and Nursery School

New Road, Ware SG12 7BT

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: St Albans**

Local authority: Hertfordshire

Date of inspection: 29 June 2015

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 117473

Headteacher: Ania Vaughan

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter 244

#### School context

Christ Church School serves pupils and their families who are mainly from a White British background. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs is average. A number of staff have shared roles and responsibilities. The RE subject leader's role is a shared responsibility between two members of staff. Christ Church School is known locally for its emphasis on the Christian faith and for its inclusive nature in welcoming all pupils. The school enjoys strong links with its parish church which is adjacent to the school.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church as a Church of England school are good.

- Strong leadership and good governance is rooted in the mutual and substantial partnership between church and school. This ensures the Christian character of the school permeates all school life.
- The children and their families are welcomed into this worshipping community. They become confident and achieve well because they are nurtured and included.
- The prayer life of this school supports the spiritual journey of the school community. This is very evident in all aspects of school life and celebrated in prayer books, reflection areas and displays.

#### Areas to improve

- Deepen pupils' understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith and enable them to encounter people of other faiths to enhance their spiritual and cultural development.
- Embed the monitoring and assessment of religious education [RE] to ensure progression.
- Enhance pupil evaluation and leadership of collective worship so it always informs future practice.

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

Christ Church School aims high in faith, love and learning. It is an inclusive Christian community rooted in its commitment to serve and nurture its children and their families. Consequently, pupils thrive in this supportive Christian environment. Attendance is very good and there have been no exclusions. This is because the school works closely with its vulnerable families and much support is given by the parish church. Good examples include the school having its own therapist to support families. Pupil progress is good. Moderation has taken place so staff know their own judgements are correct. This year attainment is lower in Year 2 and Year 6 than the national average. This is because a number of children have joined this welcoming and inclusive school during the year. However, the school works closely with the parents and there is a counselling service provided for children and their parents which parents value. Regular progress meetings help the transition process. As a result, children are given a supportive network which gives them confidence and ensures that children make progress, given their starting points. Pupils say they 'like learning about people who live in poverty and how we can help. The things we learn here, say about people in poverty, make you realise your problems aren't that bad'. Good examples include the school's support of the local foodbank. Clubs such as fencing, choir, performing arts and sports activities all help to support a wide range of achievement. Pupils show respect for different cultures and communities through their RE. This makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the school acknowledges that deepening pupil's understanding of the worldwide Anglican family of faith is an area for development.

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

Worship involves and engages the whole school community. It is rooted in Christian values, such as faith, which is described as confidence in God. Themes celebrate the church year and nurture pupils' and adults' spiritual development. Collective worship is the backbone of the school's Christian ethos where children see what it means to be Christian. For example, a Bible passage is always shared and the Lord's Prayer is always prayed as part of worship. Pupils say, 'I like prayers because when you write prayers you can use different words. You can talk freely because God and Jesus are there for you and they don't judge you'. They go on to say, 'you can ask God anything, can't you?' they know they can pray at any time. The prayer trees in school are new, but pupils use them to 'pray for people around the world and people who are not well'. Pupils enjoy worship in church which they find 'calm, respectful and special'. They value everybody being there, including the parish community and parents, not just the school community. Pupils enjoy worship led in school by clergy. Good examples include pupils making the connection between the Bible stories and hymns sung and their own lives. They say they enjoy learning that 'even if you have a very small faith, you can still achieve'. Pupils are growing in their understanding of the mystery of the Holy Trinity. They say, 'we worship God as Father and respect him very much. Jesus is God in man form. Jesus is God's Son. He taught us everything. He died for us on the cross to save our sins. When we do something right, it feels like the Holy Spirit is with us. The Holy Spirit is inside everyone'. Pupils are able to earth their understanding of this Christian mystery in the story of The Three Trees, with reference to the sailboat, altar and cross. Some pupils lead worship based on the value of the month, such as joy. House captains also lead worship regularly. Classes too, lead worship twice yearly on such themes as World War II and David and Goliath. Worship is evaluated termly. The school recognises the need to enable pupils to share their viewpoints with staff and governors more frequently so they can inform future planning and practice to improve the worshipping life of the school.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

RE enjoys a high profile in this school where teaching is consistently good and standards are high. This is because RE is well led, managed and resourced by two committed RE specialists who both have a passion and enthusiasm for this key subject in this aided primary school. Tracking of pupil progress and assessment is being established. Pupils are aware of their targets and know how to improve in the standard of their work, which is in line with other core subjects. Good examples include pupils 'doing a mind map pre-assessment and every two weeks we go back and upgrade it'. Consequently, pupils' knowledge of Judaism, Islam and different branches of Christianity, such as the Pentecostal Church, is good. They say they learn much from the visitors they meet in their RE lessons and say they would like to meet more people of faith and visit their places of worship. The school has identified this as an area for development. Pupils are secure in their knowledge of the different ways in which Christians and Muslims pray. They demonstrate good knowledge of the Christian narrative up to Ascension-tide. However, they are less secure with the meaning of Pentecost. The school recognises the importance of monitoring and embedding the assessment of RE to ensure progression.

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

Parents say the pastoral care at Christ Church is 'phenomenal'. They especially praise the school for 'never losing sight of what matters: the child'. They speak highly of how the church is helpful in ministering to parents and children and how much they benefit from the counselling service the school offers in partnership with the church. The relationship between church and school is strong due to the involvement of the vicar and curate in school life. Parents go on to praise how the older pupils look out for the younger ones and how they model this responsibility very well. As a result, they grow in confidence. This is attributed to the leadership of the school. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors clearly state their Christian vision and values for the school, where wellbeing is of paramount importance. Parents, pupils and staff value the supportive partnership between church and school. The headteacher and governors strongly support the leaders of RE. This helps them to sustain high standards. Consequently, RE and worship enjoy a high profile and meet statutory requirements. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed. Governors look closely at data on standards and progress in pupil learning. Alongside this, they reflect on the Christian ethos of the school. As a result, standards are maintained and there are clear priorities for action and a vision for the future. This includes embedding the monitoring and assessment of RE as well as working more closely with other church schools in the local area. Governors plan for, and monitor the development of the school's Christian ethos, ensuring that Christian principles and practices underpin everything. Governors support staff professional development and training, in preparation for future leadership of church schools. The school values the support and training it receives from the diocese.

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