

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St Mary's CE (VC) Junior School, Baldock

St Mary's Way  
Baldock  
SG7 6HY

#### Diocese: St Albans

Local authority:	Hertfordshire
Dates of inspection:	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2012
Date of last inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2008
School's unique reference number:	117385
Headteacher:	Mrs Patricia Jenkins
Inspector's name and number:	David Morton NS515

#### School context

St Mary's is an average size school which serves families from its immediate locality. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils with special educational needs along with those eligible for free school meals is above average

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's CE(VC) Junior School as a Church of England school is good.**

This is a welcoming, inclusive school based on Christian values. An outstanding partnership between school and parish has created an environment where pupils can flourish and develop.

#### Established strengths

- The creation of an open, inclusive Christian community based on Christian values
- The relationships between staff and pupils that are built on care and compassion
- The leadership of the headteacher
- The relationship between parish and school which nurtures and enhances the school's Christian ethos

#### Focus for development

- Develop pupils' contributions in shaping the school's Christian distinctiveness
- Introduce more regular formal evaluations of Collective Worship
- Audit the impact of the school's values programme to date to ensure that it is affecting all areas of school life

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

St Mary's CE (VC) Junior School is a distinctive church school with an inclusive Christian ethos. It has continued to improve since its last inspection and Christian values are increasingly impacting on all areas. The values education programme, introduced in September 2011, is proving to be an effective way of disseminating the school's values and of creating a shared language to describe the impact of the school's Christian ethos. Parents speak highly of the way it is starting to affect the behaviour and attitudes of their children. Impact of the values education programme is currently good and has potential, once fully embedded, to be outstanding. Relationships between staff and pupils are outstanding and are a strength of the school. Staff show high levels of care and compassion towards pupils and this is recognised and praised by parents as making a difference. The protective

behaviours scheme builds on the school's Christian values and is good at enabling children to promote their own safety and express how they are feeling. This builds relationships, a sense of community and a shared responsibility for each other. Through the RE curriculum pupils gain a good understanding of the beliefs and practices of other faiths and cultures. They show good levels of respect for each other and welcome new pupils into the school community generously. Pupils are outward looking and their regular fund raising weeks provide a good example of how they seek to care for others. Pupil's have a strong voice that is articulated through the work of the school council. Currently this does not actively consider how the Christian distinctiveness of the school could be developed. Including this would enhance pupil's contribution to the development of the school as a church school.

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

Collective Worship is undertaken in the school hall and makes good use of multimedia facilities. The worshipping environment is good with a candle being used as a focal point. This is lit during periods of prayer and reflection which are usually held at the end of the act of worship. Throughout the year pupils and staff have the opportunity to participate in acts of worship in church and in school including the Eucharist. Knowledge of Anglican traditions and patterns of worship are good, the Lord's Prayer and other prayers and blessings being used on a regular basis. Building on the outstanding partnership that exists between the school and the local Christian community, the parish church holds an annual service in the school that all are encouraged to attend. Worship is thoroughly planned and is linked to the school's values education programme, reflecting where possible the liturgical calendar. This is good practice although its impact is yet to spread fully across the school community. Pupil attitudes to Collective Worship have varied since the last inspection but are now good overall. The school has, through its own self evaluation, worked hard to address pupil concerns although some still remain especially about the consistency and quality of worship across the week. The introduction of regular self evaluation of Collective Worship involving pupils, staff and governors would help support the school's considerable efforts to make worship relevant, stimulating and fulfilling.

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

St Mary's CE (VC) Junior School is a reflective community that is always seeking to improve for the benefit of its pupils. Stakeholders warmly support the school's Christian ethos and the way it welcomes and cares for all. The leadership of the headteacher is described as inspirational and is outstanding. Her drive, energy and commitment has developed the school into an open, inclusive Christian community. The school has met all its targets for development identified under the previous inspection and has the capacity to continue to improve as a church school. The headteacher is effectively supported by the school's governors whose involvement is outstanding. The development of the school's Christian distinctiveness is monitored efficiently through the school improvement plan and through regular discussion at governing body meetings. In addition many governors are actively involved in school activities as pupil mentors, classroom assistants and by participating or leading extra curricular activities. The relationship that exists between the parish church and school is also outstanding. This reflects the outstanding contribution the parish Rector makes to the school community leading worship, participating in governing body activities and through his pastoral care which sensitively includes pupils and parents in the worshipping life of the church.