



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

West Meon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane
West Meon
Petersfield
Hampshire
GU32 1LF

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Portsmouth and Winchester

Local authority: Hampshire

Date of inspection: 1 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 31 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 116322

Headteacher: Julie Kelly

Inspector's name and number: Julia Welford 576

School context

West Meon Primary School is a small village school with 63 pupils in three mixed aged classes. The majority of pupils are from a white British background and a wide catchment area. The school has a lower than average number of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding and a small number of children with special needs. The school's Ofsted report in February 2016 confirmed the school as remaining good. Saint John the Evangelist Church is adjacent to the school. The school has achieved the enhanced Healthy School Award and the Silver Sports Mark Award.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of West Meon as a Church of England school are good

- The leadership of the headteacher ensures relationships across the school community are collaborative and supportive, securing an environment that encourages all learners to feel secure, happy, and valued.
- Parents appreciate the school's Christian ethos because it gives their children good values to live their lives by. They feel that the school supports all children and their families extremely well, whether or not they are Christians.
- The mutually supportive links between the school, the church and the community enable the school's distinctive character to grow and develop.

Areas to improve

- Ensure effective regular and systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of Collective Worship so that its impact on school life continues to develop.
- Continue to cultivate the focus on Christian values across the planning of the two-year curriculum.
- Establish an effective assessment system in religious education (RE) to ensure that pupils are excited and challenged by the subject.

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

The school's ethos is based on three core Christian values (creativity, courage and respect), which compliment the 'Five Minds for the Future', (Howard Gardner). The focus on Christian values results in a school that is happy and welcoming. The Christian values are relatively new and whilst they are embedded in the daily life of the school, they now need to have a focus across the two-year curriculum. The proportion of pupils making expected progress was close to national averages in the core subjects and the school recognises the need to further increase pupils' attainment. There is a strong focus on the needs of all individuals, with special emphasis on vulnerable pupils seen as an aspect of the school's Christian distinctiveness. There has been significant staff turnover but a committed and highly effective team has now been established. As an expression of the school's inclusive Gospel values, pupils' wellbeing is taken very seriously. Consequently, pupils know that they are well cared for and that their teachers work with them in order for them to achieve their very best. They feel safe and want to be in school, which means that attendance is very good. RE contributes considerably to pupils' understanding of Christian beliefs and the life and work of Jesus, as well as their knowledge of other faiths and cultures. Staff are aware of the need to foster their pupils' awareness of religious and cultural diversity, given the school's mainly white British demographic, and the underlying value of respect ensures enthusiasm for learning about different faiths and customs. This leads to strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, and to respect for the views of those who have different beliefs from themselves. The school celebrates a wide range of achievement. Accordingly, it provides a balanced curriculum with a range of extra-curricular activities, including residential visits for Years 4, 5, and 6, trips and enrichment activities such as participation in the West Meon Festival of Books and the Praise and Celebration Song day for Church Schools. The school council gives opportunities for taking responsibility and pupils are involved in various forms of raising money for charitable causes such as 'Shelterbox'. There are other opportunities for older pupils such as becoming Peer Mentors who receive annual training for their role, which includes reviewing the excellent anti-bullying leaflet and leading activities for younger children in the playground. Parents remark that their children reflect on the Christian ethos at home by asking further questions, singing worship songs etc.; one child had written 'Bless this house' on a note on their front door. There is a close relationship with the Church of St John the Evangelist that continues to develop further.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The daily act of worship enhances the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Awareness of the Anglican tradition is developed by the use of the parish church for festival services such as Harvest, Remembrance, Nativity and the Leavers' service. These services are led by different year groups and may also link to the village community, such as Year 3 pupils delivering the harvest donations. The whole school collective worship observed was situated in a large room, as there is no hall on site. The worship room also has a central focus area for Christian symbols, prayer books and artefacts, including those pertaining to the church history of the school, and the Christian values are clearly displayed. The worship observed was led by the incumbent, who leads worship fortnightly, and was assisted by the headteacher. Children gather quietly as peaceful music plays, each class bringing a candle to the central worship area to stand alongside a larger candle, because, as a pupil told me, 'Jesus is the light of the world'. Worship starts with a liturgical response, linking the school's worship to the Anglican tradition. Appropriate links were made from the old testament account of Moses as a baby to Mothering Sunday. Pupils enjoyed answering questions as it made them feel included and generally worship contains a variety of elements, music, bible story, drama, and prayer which pupils enjoy engaging with. Collective worship is efficiently planned and coordinated by the head, supported by the vicar, and is led by various staff members so that pupils experience different styles. Every six weeks the school also welcomes a worship group from Christ Church in

Winchester, which the pupils particularly enjoy. Theological teaching occurs mainly through the medium of collective worship with a strong focus on Bible stories and the life and person of Jesus, although sometimes worship focuses on the festivals of other faiths. Each class has a bound book of prayers written by the class and used as grace before lunch. There are reflective areas in each classroom, though these are not generally well used. Pupils have a developing understanding of the Christian calendar and of colours used in the Anglican church that reflect different times of the church's year; a display showed these matched to months of the year, and pupils wearing the vicar's different vestments. Monitoring of collective worship is informal and the school recognises that a more structured pattern of monitoring and evaluation would lead to further development. Collective worship planning is reviewed annually with the addition of new ideas such as the headteacher introducing the '40 Acts of Kindness' for Lent, which the pupils were following with enthusiasm.

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

The headteacher has established a happy, welcoming school, where all are valued. She works with dedication to promote the distinctiveness of the school as a Church school. As a result, the aims and development plans for the school are now related to aspects of Christian distinctiveness. There are beneficial links with the local small school partnership and strong links with the community; an example was a project which involved the honouring and contemplation of the lives of soldiers from the village who died in World War I and the subsequent creation of poppy plaques around the village designed by the school council. There are long-standing and positive links enjoyed with the parish church which are of mutual benefit; an expression of this is the good involvement of the vicar as a governor, in leading school worship fortnightly and advising on worship and RE. All stake-holders are consulted, and their feedback is used in self-evaluation as a Church school. As members of the school council, pupils feel that they are consulted and are able to influence matters that concern them. Parents are very positive about the school and its emphasis on the Christian ethos. There is a parents' forum where they are consulted on aspects of school life including developments in the curriculum, and school communication. The way the school lives out its Christian values is reflected in the positive comments made in parental questionnaires. As one parent commented, "My son has a real sense of belief, which the school has helped to develop". RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. RE has an important place in the school and is valued by all; pupils appropriately address the diversity of religious beliefs and practices in God's world. A pupil in Year 2 was able to make a link between the change in Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, to the change Jesus made to the life of Zaccheus. The RE leader is aware of the need to support staff in marking and assessment of the subject and planning for this has been arranged. She develops skills through regular professional development and colleagues welcome her guidance in delivering the locally agreed syllabus. Diocesan support is appreciated and effective use is made of training opportunities for staff and governors within the context of Church school education. The Headteacher, staff and governors have correctly evaluated the effectiveness of the school's Christian ethos identifying areas for further development and there is an annual monitoring plan as a Church school in place. Each area identified as a focus for development in the last inspection has been addressed and the link with a twin school, Mayhoro School in Uganda, gives pupils a global understanding of a different culture. Relationships of this Christian community are strengthened by the inclusive and welcoming nature of the school staff and governors. The leadership is effective and well placed to continue to develop as a Church school.