



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Chilham St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Hill, Chilham, Kent CT4 8DE

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 14 January 2016

Date of last inspection: 5 January 2011

School's unique reference number: 118665

Headteacher: Richard Williams

Inspector's name and number: Anne Southgate 820

School context

Chilham St Mary's is a smaller than average sized primary school. The majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds, with a significant proportion coming from Traveller backgrounds. There is an average proportion of pupils with special needs or disabilities. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes.

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

- Chilham is a highly inclusive school, in which differences between people are respected and valued.
- Behaviour is usually good and pupils are helped to reflect well on their behaviour and attitudes.
- Pupils, including those who have special needs, are enabled to achieve their potential.
- Good use is made of small spaces to declare the Christian character of the school.

Areas to improve

- Reconsider the value of 'pride', so that the school has a full set of explicitly Christian values.
- Develop assessment and challenge in religious education (RE) to increase the effectiveness of RE.
- Conduct self-evaluation with all stakeholders on a regular annual cycle to increase its impact on school improvement as a church school.

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

This is a highly inclusive church school, in which each individual is valued equally. Differences are respected and celebrated. The school's Christian values of respect, forgiveness, generosity, trust and love underpin attitudes and approaches to attendance, behaviour and exclusion. Pupils value the opportunities that they have to take time out to reflect on their behaviour and they are self-aware as a result. Exclusion is a last resort. Pupils who have experienced difficulties at other schools are welcomed, and they are offered a fresh start at Chilham. Positive attitudes to the diverse needs and backgrounds of the pupils result in a genuine Christian family in which all feel supported. This increases pupils' confidence to learn. Consequently, progress is good and pupils achieve their full potential. A sixth value, 'pride', was added by pupils. This is not a Christian value and leaders need to re-evaluate its inclusion in the set of school values. However, the other five values are securely based on Christian teaching. They underpin the work of the school and they drive improvement. As a result, achievement is good. Pupils comment that the Christian values "make our school a nicer environment as everyone is helped to follow the values". Pupils feel secure and are able to take risks in their learning. For example, a Year 2 pupil said, "Our school is part of God's family and God loves you even if you make mistakes". Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is strong. Pupils lead work in support of charities, and their awareness of current issues, such as migration, is impressive. Pupils value opportunities in RE to learn about the beliefs of others, and their knowledge of biblical stories is good. The issue from the last inspection to display RE work has been fully addressed. However, there is a lack of challenge in RE so that pupils can reach higher levels of attainment. Assessment in RE is underdeveloped and lacks consistency.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils and adults value collective worship. It has an important place in the daily life of the school and participation is both wide and enthusiastic. The school values are set in their biblical context, often with the help of pupils acting the stories. Pupils are enabled to reflect on the significance of the values in their own lives. Worship is inclusive, ensuring that all, irrespective of personal belief or disability, are engaged. The issue from the previous inspection to widen involvement in planning has been addressed. School family services are held in the church. These are jointly planned by school leaders and the vicar. Pupils lead alongside the vicar. The local community is invited to these services and a growing number attend them. Both the incumbent and the chair of governors regularly lead school worship and they agree themes with school leaders. Pupils understand the significance of Christian festivals, including Pentecost and Epiphany. Older pupils have a good understanding of key Christian beliefs, such as that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Reflection and prayer play an important role in the school day. The Lord's prayer is displayed on almost every door in the school, as suggested by the pupils. As a result, pupils know the Lord's prayer well. Good use is made of the limited space available to display pupils' reflections and to gather their prayers. A prayer tree is displayed on a wall, making creative use of space and enabling pupils to offer their thoughts and concerns to God. Monitoring and evaluation of worship has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are frequently asked informally for feedback and this has led to improvements. For example, pupils requested a more practical and visual telling of Bible stories, such as the wise and foolish builders. However, formal monitoring with all stakeholders is not securely in place. This was a development point from the last inspection.

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

The headteacher is passionate in his Christian belief that each individual is of equal worth. This is communicated well to the school community. As a result, everyone feels valued and all pupils can achieve their potential. The school's Christian values impact positively on the

decisions that leaders take, and on their approach to pupils and to each other. This is particularly the case in relation to issues of behaviour and wellbeing. The partnership with the church is strong. The incumbent and chair of governors are active in school life. The school's use of the church is beginning to bring more families into church. The relationship is, therefore, mutually beneficial. Staffing is stable. Teachers comment that they feel well supported and they are very committed to continuing to develop the Christian character of the school. The RE leader accesses appropriate training, for example, that provided by the diocese. Therefore, the school is helping to develop future leaders of church schools. The school is at the heart of the local community and is an important part of community events, such as egg rolling at Easter and carol singing at Christmas. The arrangements for RE and for collective worship meet statutory requirements. Self-evaluation as a church school is accurate. The headteacher has a clear understanding of how to improve further. The school improvement plan includes consideration of how to develop as a church school. However, some stakeholders, including governors, are not part of a regular annual cycle of self-evaluation and so self-evaluation is limited in its effectiveness.

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