



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

All Souls' Church of England Primary School

Stanley Road
Folkestone
CT19 4LG

Previous SIAMS grade: outstanding

Current inspection grade: outstanding

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Date of inspection: 11 February 2015

Date of last inspection: 8 March 2010

School's unique reference number: 118870

Headteacher: Annie Wiles

Inspector's name and number: John Ross NS 476

School context

This is a larger-than-average primary school serving an area of high social deprivation. Just over a third of pupils are of Asian heritage, the majority coming from Ghurkha army families. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is high. The proportion of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. Stability of the school roll fluctuates more than in most schools. All Souls' Church is located a short distance from the school. Very few pupils have an existing church connection on joining the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Souls' Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The strong Christian ethos, rooted in gospel values and teaching, has a powerful and positive impact across the whole school community
- High quality collective worship in a variety of forms, including extensive pupil leadership and participation, makes an outstanding contribution to spiritual development
- In religious education (RE) strong leadership, excellent teaching and a broad range of creative activities enable all pupils to achieve well
- The inspiring and visionary Christian leadership of the headteacher, school leaders and governors ensures that the Christian character of the school permeates its life

Areas to improve

- Update the school website to reflect All Souls' distinctiveness as a church school

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

All Souls' is an integrated, inclusive and happy school. Its Christian character is explicit through its Christian values which are lived out in its daily life. The school is highly successful in promoting a strong Christian ethos while enabling those of other beliefs to maintain their integrity. Despite a large proportion of pupils from Buddhist and Hindu backgrounds, there are no withdrawals from collective worship or RE. A recent survey of pupil views and face to face discussions during the inspection indicate that pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their school experience. 100% say they enjoy school. When interviewed, pupils described the school using words such as amazing, special, fun and enjoyable. When asked about possible improvements, one pupil immediately responded 'I don't think it needs to be any better!' Overall pupil achievement is good. Disadvantaged groups of pupils achieve as well as their peers because the school provides a rich network of support for pupils and their families. Behaviour is excellent because pupils know that everyone is valued equally and as an individual. The behaviour policy refers to compassion, kindness and forgiveness, 'Just as in Christ, God forgives you' [Ephesians 4:32] and this is reflected in relationships at all levels. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is delivered not only through collective worship and RE but through the whole curriculum and the many and varied additional activities on offer, such as music and sport. Care for the vulnerable and disadvantaged is extended to the local, national and worldwide community, through the many charities which the school supports. Pupils can explain why it is important in a church school to follow the example of Christ in helping others. The school environment makes a very strong contribution to the school's Christian character and pupils' spiritual development. Christian symbols, Bible verses, posters and displays reflecting Christian values are prominent throughout the building. Much of this is work produced by the pupils themselves. The school is a multi-cultural community where differences are either accepted or largely go unnoticed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is an essential part of the life of the school. This extends beyond the statutory act of daily collective worship for everyone into classrooms, off-site activities and regular prayer which punctuates the routine of the school day. This makes the school a genuine worshipping community. Worship is very well led, using themes which reinforce the school's Christian values and follow the rhythm of the church's year. A particular strength is the level of involvement and participation by all pupils. There is a weekly act of worship in All Souls' Church, led by each class in turn. The act of worship observed during the inspection was outstanding. The theme of Wisdom drew from both the Old and New Testaments. A class of year 5 and 6 pupils led, through reading, acting, singing and saying prayers. Audio-visual resources were used to excellent effect. Every pupil in the class actively participated. The response from the pupils and staff assembled was one of engagement, respect, reflection and joy (there were some moments of real humour). While unmistakably biblical in content, with clear reference to Jesus Christ in the singing and prayers, every person present, of whatever belief and background, was involved. Pupils have an impressive understanding of the difficult idea of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and when asked could explain this in a variety of ways. Pupils have a good understanding of the church year and key festivals in the Anglican calendar such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. There are six additional services held in church during the year which mark important events. These services in church, together with the use of liturgical colours and set prayers in school, successfully introduce pupils to the richness of the Anglican tradition. As a successful response to the last inspection, pupils are taught about the Eucharist. Prayer holds a central place in the life of the school. Each class has its own prayer book, to which pupils contribute, and pupils value the many opportunities for personal reflection. All stakeholders are regularly asked for feedback on worship, to aid planning. Since a substantial proportion of the school community is not Christian, important festivals of other religions are observed. Referring to those from other religions, a member of staff commented, 'We celebrate with them and they with us.'

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The RE policy states: 'RE is a "corner-stone" of the general ethos of the school.' This is indeed the case. Pupils' achievement in RE exceeds national expectations. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress equal to their peers. Pupils are enthusiastic about RE and readily relate what they learn to their own lives. Pupils can reflect deeply on their learning, making an important contribution to their spiritual development. They enjoy learning about Christianity, which is the major area of study, but also finding out about Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. The school judges all teaching to be at least good and mostly outstanding. The three lessons observed during the inspection verified this judgement. Teaching is confident and secure, while learning allows pupils to be creative, think for themselves and take initiative. For example, a lesson for a Year 5 and 6 class was based on the gospel narrative of the Good Shepherd [John 10]. The teacher gradually allowed the story to unfold, with skilful use of visual aids. Pupils listened intently and respectfully, contributing their views at suitable points. Pupils then worked on their own interpretation of the narrative, showing exceptional independence in, for example, their use of art, modelling and discussion. RE is very well led. Teachers are confident because of the support they receive from the subject leader. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to RE. In one lesson observed, a teaching assistant explained the significance of fasting for Muslims, helping pupils develop their understanding of how other beliefs and traditions affect people's lives. The school has responded successfully to issues for development in RE from the previous inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' books indicates regular teacher comments on what has gone well and how to improve. Pupils have an opportunity to respond to these comments, and they frequently do.

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

The strong and visionary Christian leadership of the headteacher, well supported by senior staff and the governing body, ensures that the school's Christian character has an impact on the achievement and well-being of everyone within the school community. All issues for development from the previous denominational inspection have been successfully addressed and the school has improved since then. Arrangements for collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. During the inspection a cross section of staff were interviewed. They were unanimous that the school ethos welcomes and integrates all staff well, irrespective of their religious beliefs. Staff appreciate the strong support they have for professional development, for example through middle leader courses and links with other church schools. The headteacher is seconded to work for the diocese two days each week. This provides opportunities for other staff to step up to leadership roles, thus helping to prepare for future leaders of church schools. Robust and accurate self-evaluation as a church school involves all stakeholders. This in turn feeds into development planning which is realistic yet challenging. Governors are well informed and highly committed to the school's Christian character. As critical friends they both support school leaders and hold them to account. School documents make explicit reference to the school's Christian character but the school website does not fully reflect this. The school is very effective at engaging with parents and carers. Parents are welcome in school and can share any problems they may bring. Links with the parish church have grown stronger since the last inspection. Members of the church community are regular visitors to the school. The school enjoys good links within the deanery and is developing links with the wider Christian community. Links with the cathedral and diocese are warm and supportive. There are good links within the local community. For example, pupils take a leading role in the annual Canada Day celebrations, a high profile event in Folkestone. There is regular and fruitful cooperation with other local primary and secondary schools.