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

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| **Marden Vale Church of England Academy** William Street, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 9BD**Previous SIAS grade: not previously inspected as an academy****Current inspection grade: Good****Diocese: Salisbury**Local authority: n/aDate of inspection: 23 June 2016Date of last inspection: n/aSchool’s unique reference number: 141988Headteacher: David MayerInspector’s name and number: David Shears (423) |
| **School context**Marden Vale Church of England Academy is an average sized primary school with 283 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is much higher than average. There is a resource base funded for 15 pupils on site and a nurture room that provides for 12 vulnerable pupils. Following an unsettled period, leadership has been secure since the appointment of the current headteacher in January 2015 and deputy headteacher in September 2015. The school became an academy as part of the Diocesan multi academy trust (MAT) September 2015. The leader for religious education (RE) has recently returned from maternity leave.  |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Marden Vale Academy as a Church of England school are good*** The school’s Christian values have a positive impact on pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
* The care of pupils is a strength of the school which results in highly positive relationships between staff and pupils.
* The specific needs of pupils within the resource base and nurture room are well met.
* Leaders and managers have a clear vision for school improvement and as a result pupils are making better progress in their learning.
* The links with the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust are strong resulting in effective training and support for staff.
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| **Areas to improve*** Adapt the planning and the organisation of collective worship so that it enables pupils to further deepen their understanding of the values as being distinctively Christian.
* Formalise the monitoring of leader and managers to give a clearer picture of priorities.
* Promote the school’s distinctiveness more widely, encouraging parents to work with the school to support their children’s personal development and well-being through its values.
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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners**As a result of the school’s Christian principle of all being loved by God, pupils of all abilities are equally valued and supported by the school. Parents agree that the care of pupils is a strength with one parent summing it up as the school fitting around the child rather than the child fitting around the school. In particular, the care and support for pupils who attend the resource base and the nurture group is outstanding. The provision for these pupils is tailored to their individual needs both in terms of their academic and personal development. The farm is a valuable asset in supporting the emotional and spiritual development of these pupils. The one rule – We all look after each other – is fully embedded in the fabric of the school and is consistently used by staff. This means that pupils behave well and demonstrate a good level of care towards each other. When pupils are not as kind, staff are skilled at helping them to reflect on their behaviour and attitudes and how they can resolve the problem with the other pupil, resulting in reconciliation and forgiveness. This supports the social development of pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to explore ethics and morals through discussion and debate, resulting in a growing understanding of right and wrong. Pupils have the chance to support others in need beyond the school such as Children in Need and in singing for the elderly. Religious education makes a helpful contribution to the pupils’ cultural development and pupils know that the Christian church is made up of people from many different cultures. RE also has an impact in reinforcing the link between Bible stories and the school’s values. For example, each class spent a day looking at a particular Bible story which culminated in big displays re-telling the story. The pupils visited each other’s displays putting up post-it notes making comments about what they had learnt from the story. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect together, including ‘candle time’ when pupils think about the values that they have been learning in collective worship or topical issues in the news. A structure for the development of spirituality has been introduced in collective worship and the school recognises the potential for this to be used more widely.  |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**Pupils say that they enjoy collective worship because it is a time when they are able to reflect and be calm. The lighting of the candle reminds them that God is with them as they worship. Planning for collective worship is based on a set of twelve distinctively Christian values. Pupils are able talk about the current value that they are exploring and can relate it to key Bible stories. However, the organisation of worship through the week means that pupils do not have enough opportunities to deepen their understanding of these values and their Christian significance. Pupils are aware of the Trinity and, in particular, have a good understanding of God as father, provider and the creator. They know that Jesus is important to Christians but their knowledge of the Holy Spirit is underdeveloped. Pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of prayer and can talk about how it is used as a means to say thank you to God, to say sorry to him and to ask for help and support for themselves and others. While the worship leader sometimes leads the prayers, pupils assert that they sometimes write prayers to be used in collective worship and there are times when individuals volunteer to pray spontaneously. They also pray at other times in the school day. For example, when observing ‘candle time’ pupils were discussing an important situation currently in the news after which a number of pupils volunteered to pray through what they had discussed. Prayers are also said before pupils eat their lunch. Pupils clearly enjoy participating in collective worship and have asked to be able to contribute even more. The school is responding to this by giving them various responsibilities within worship. Staff also report that they enjoy collective worship. They like the opportunity to reflect and to listen to the thoughts of other staff who are leading worship. There is some evaluation of collective worship, although this is informal and does not always take into account the views of all stakeholders. Nevertheless priorities to continue improvements in collective worship are recorded in an action plan. The local rector leads collective worship regularly as does the local Baptist minister and the leader of the local free church. This gives pupils the experience of different styles of Christian worship. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good**The headteacher, together with senior leaders, has built successfully on the school’s strengths and has implemented improvements where they have been needed. Consequently the effectiveness of the school is improving. There has been an important focus in raising the attainment of pupils in English and mathematics and pupils are now making better progress in their learning. This development has been supported through the application of the school’s Christian values such as perseverance and courage in encouraging pupils to push themselves and keep on trying in their work. The school has a strong vision of care of pupils and their families and consequently this is a strength of the school, creating a loving Christian atmosphere in which all feel safe, respected and valued. While this is very evident within the school, it is not promoted and celebrated well enough on the school’s website, in newsletters or in policies. In particular, parents are not routinely informed about the Christian value being explored and so opportunities are missed for parents to engage with the school in encouraging their own children to live out these values outside of school. The leaders of collective worship and RE are enthusiastic and have access to training to enhance the provision of these areas further. In particular, the RE leader recognises the need to utilise assessment information to check the progress of pupils and ensure that this reflects what is recorded in RE books. The governing body is very supportive of the school and the chair of governors in particular is pro-active in monitoring the school’s Christian distinctiveness by regularly visiting the school and participating in collective worship. While this sometimes includes informal feedback, governors and senior staff recognise that the monitoring of collective worship, RE and the school’s Christian character needs to be formalised to ensure that it becomes part of the school development planning process. The areas to improve from the school’s previous inspection have been tackled well, particularly in recent years, demonstrating that the current leaders and managers have the capacity to further develop the Christian character of the school. |

SIAMS report June 2016 Marden Vale Academy, Calne SN11 9BD