



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St George's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Pound Lane
Semington
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 6LP

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Date of inspection: 10 December 2014

Date of last inspection: January 2010

School's unique reference number: 126353

Headteacher: Gordon Campbell

Inspector's name and number: Sally Naish 780

School context

St George's Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average with 84 children on roll. Pupil numbers are rapidly increasing. It serves the village of Semington, although some families travel from further afield. There has been a recent build so that all three classrooms are within the main school building. The school provides wrap around care before and after school. The numbers of children with Special Educational Needs is above average. Numbers on pupil premium are low. There are close links with the church. Following changes of leadership, the new headteacher has been in post for one term, having been acting headteacher since January 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Christian based leadership and a new school ethos based on Christian values are beginning to make an impact on relationships, attitudes to learning and resilience.
- The good relationship with the church and local community results in mutual support and fellowship.

Areas to improve

- Improve the quality of school evaluation at all levels to ensure that the ethos statement is lived out so that all children are cherished, valued, challenged and inspired.
- Improve leadership by governors so that they support, monitor and challenge the school's Christian distinctiveness as a major factor in school improvement.
- Improve the teaching of religious education so that it contributes effectively to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

The school has been challenged by three changes of leadership since the last inspection. This has resulted in a lack of focus on church school distinctiveness which has only recently begun to be addressed. At the beginning of this academic year, staff and governors created a new school ethos, 'In God's love, we cherish, challenge and inspire' in order to develop the school's distinctively Christian character and drive school improvement. This has already started to make an impact on children's well-being. Self-esteem, resilience and behaviour have all improved, resulting in more enthusiasm for learning and increased perseverance. Behaviour is largely good, and is improving because children who lack emotional resilience are made aware of choices and consequences. Children link this to Jesus, 'He never did anything wrong, he was perfect. We make the wrong choices sometimes, but Jesus teaches us that God forgives us. So we should forgive others'. The new Christian ethos is welcomed by parents, who say that they might not believe in God, but that the school's values are helping children to make the right choices which will benefit them throughout their lives. Children know and understand the ethos and are keen to show displays around the public areas of school. These help them put their values into practice. However, there are few displays in classrooms to encourage children to reflect or think about religious or spiritual ideas. Religious education teaching is only satisfactory. This is largely due to inconsistency across the school involving a lack of coverage and depth resulting from insufficient monitoring and evaluation. Where teaching is good pupils are enquiring enthusiastically into key questions. They use higher level thinking skills to construct evaluative responses to these questions. Where teaching is weak they are given low level sequencing tasks that do not inspire or challenge them creatively, intellectually or spiritually. Children in Year 6 are given tasks of leadership and responsibility in school and oversee school council. Fundraising is a major task of school council 'to help poor people'. It is also the main vehicle for pupil voice in school with each child having the opportunity to serve on it during their time in school. The school has strong and mutually beneficial links with the community. It supports community activities such as hosting the village fete and taking harvest gifts around the village. Parents of the thriving Parent Teacher Association (PTA) are appreciative of staff giving up their time to support events. The school also provides a venue for monthly 'Messy Church' which has an increasing number of school families attending.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

The new head teacher has recognised the importance of collective worship which, as a committed Christian, he uses to underpin the school ethos. As a result worship is beginning to make an impact on the everyday life of the school including behaviour and relationships. However, the school has no effective system in place to evaluate collective worship. Children are respectful and listen well. When asked to discuss in pairs they are on task and give thoughtful responses. A group of older children are enthusiastic about an assembly they plan to lead the following week based on world poverty. Unaided, they are preparing a powerpoint presentation and explain how they plan to enact the good Samaritan to show how we should care about others. The vicar leads worship fortnightly and this is valued by the school community. Teachers also lead worship based on the Values for Life programme. There is less focus on the church year in planning, therefore, whilst children understand that Jesus is God's son, they do not yet understand the concept of the Holy Spirit. Children visit the church for special services and a recent Christingle service was very well supported by parents and the local community. Parents value the inclusion of the current collective worship theme in the bi-weekly newsletter which they say helps them to reinforce it at home. They also enjoy Friday afternoon celebration 'assemblies' and staff and parents note the care that the headteacher displays in talking to each child about their achievements. They add that the headteacher prays spontaneously 'from the heart' and this is helping children see the relevance of personal prayer and reflection. Children recite the Lord's Prayer and say Grace before lunch. However there are fewer opportunities for them to write prayers themselves to use in worship. Although there are some religious symbols around the school in public places, there are no reflection areas in classrooms which limit the children's spiritual development. Over the last term there have been great improvements to worship which now has an explicit Christian focus. However worship is not yet good because it is not planned collaboratively and evaluated systematically which makes it

difficult for the school to analyse its influence on the school community.

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

Since the last inspection, governors have not been rigorous in addressing issues around the leadership of the school as a church school. Collective worship and RE policies are out of date and there have been few governors' monitoring visits. Until very recently none of the points for development from the last inspection had been dealt with resulting in areas of weakness across the school. The school's current performance data suggests that achievement is below expectations because of a historic lack of rigorous and accurate assessment and target setting. As a result children are given insufficient guidance on ways to improve in their learning which causes them to become demotivated. This is changing as the Christian values begin to permeate the curriculum and children engage with each other and their learning. The school's ethos of cherishing every child can be seen in some inclusive practice. The school has appointed an experienced Special Educational Needs coordinator to monitor progress and to ensure that teachers take responsibility for meeting the needs of all children. In addition, an advisory support teacher ensures that vulnerable new children feel welcomed and included and their needs targeted. Pupil premium funding is used judiciously. Children 'cherish' the headteacher and parents note that he is always available and ready to help or deal with any issue. He applies the code of behaviour fairly and rigorously and two temporary exclusions show all the children the consequences of poor choices. Staff welcome the new ethos and are beginning to see its effectiveness in raising standards as well as promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Governors and staff are now beginning to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a church school. However, its effectiveness as a church school is only satisfactory because the recent changes in focus and leadership have yet to be fully embedded and their impact evaluated.

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