



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Milton on Stour CE VA Primary School

Milton-on-Stour  
Gillingham  
Dorset  
SP8 5QD

**Previous SIAS grade: Good**

**Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Salisbury**

Local authority: Dorset

Dates of inspection: 6 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 4 June 2009

School's unique reference number: 113801

Headteacher: Matthew Barge

Inspector's name and number: Marcia Headon 761

### School context

**Milton on Stour CE VA Primary School** is a smaller than average sized primary school. It takes children from Gillingham and Milton on Stour. It has increased in size over the past few years. It has 140 pupils aged between 4 and 11. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs and or physical disabilities is slightly below the national averages. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the additional funding known as the pupil premium is well below average. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2011.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Milton on Stour as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and deputy who model strongly the Christian values of the school.
- The work of the Foundation Governors who provide excellent challenge and support to the school.
- The teaching in Religious Education (RE) which develops pupils' knowledge and understanding and ideas about the significance and impact of religion.

### Areas to improve

- Link the school's values to the mission statement more closely so that pupils can see the close alignment and can explain this.
- Develop the evaluation of collective worship by all stakeholders so that it is sharper and used to bring about change.

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

The school through its teaching and ethos has been highly effective in developing pupils' understanding of the impact of Christian values on their own lives. For example pupils talked about forgiveness and how they forgave others, linking this to the teachings of Luke, of the importance of justice in the world which they linked to the story of Jonah or to the service they should give which they linked to the Good Samaritan. These values are embedded across the curriculum. For example, when talking about what makes a good leader, the pupils referred to Christian values as being vitally important. The school mission statement encapsulates the values although the three core parts of the mission statement of believing, achieving and growing together, are not openly linked to the values. The academic needs of pupils at Milton on Stour are met very well. In 2015 95% of pupils at the end of Year 1 passed the phonics test and all who were retested from last year passed. Attainment in 2015 in reading, writing and mathematics is predicted to be very high and it is estimated that all children in Year 6 will have made the nationally expected progress and a higher proportion of pupils than nationally will have made outstanding progress. This continues the trend from 2014. The school is fully inclusive and provides excellent support for pupils who have special educational needs. The gap between those pupils in receipt of pupil premium and those who are not has also narrowed. That the school meets needs well is proven by the outstanding attendance and the enjoyment pupils gain from school. Relationships between all in the school community are excellent and as one member of staff commented 'the way we are all treated as equals shows how well the Christian values of this school are embedded'. The values teach pupils to help one another in the playground and act as buddies to younger children. Pupils actively help others and the idea of a group of pupils for a Milton Mile run has raised over £2000 which will be split between funds for the restoration works to the local church and for a cancer charity. Behaviour is outstanding. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective as a result of the creative curriculum and exciting projects such as an RE day where different religions were studied and then compared with Christianity. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding and fostered by reflection diaries and corners, the big questions book, and the outdoor spiritual garden. Children show respect for other cultures, and through their work in RE and collective worship recognise the importance of tolerance and peace. Through the links with the Sudan they have a good understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Pupils respond in a highly positive manner and participate willingly in collective worship. They particularly enjoy singing and the wide variety in worship, visits from the clergy, visits to the church and 'Open the Book' sessions from local parishioners. One Key Stage 1 pupil reported that collective worship was the time for thinking and concentrating with God. Collective worship, which follows the Values for Life themes as well as the Christian festivals and Jigsaw themes, is well planned by the headteacher and clergy, is coherently followed through in the week and clearly has an impact upon pupils. Parents appreciate the fact that they receive regular information about the materials which will be used in collective worship and they report that the impact of worship is evident at home and its content is often discussed by children. The clergy who lead worship allow the pupils the opportunity to experience different Anglican traditions but key elements of worship such as lighting a candle, changing of liturgical colours, simple responses to liturgy, Bible stories and prayers are used by all. The pupils are involved in planning and leading collective worship on a half-termly basis for whole school worship but more frequently in class. A Year 6 group very enthusiastically lead the younger children in this and plan a variety of different activities often involving drama. Prayer is important to the children, many of whom talk confidently about the purpose of prayer. They place prayers they write on prayer trees or cubes around the school. These are used sensitively by staff, sharing them in collective worship if the child so wishes. Grace and prayers at the end of school are also seen as important by the pupils and staff. Older pupils have a well-developed understanding of the Trinity and even younger pupils were able to give some

explanation. Although worship is evaluated by pupils regularly, their comments are mostly positive and are not always sharp enough to influence any development or effect much change.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Pupils enjoy their RE lessons hugely especially the opportunity to discuss 'big questions', to reflect and bring their own personal observations and thoughts to the lesson. Teaching in RE is of a high quality as was seen in the books and staff are confident in delivering the lessons. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson pupils considered the actions of some girls in saving a life. The lesson objective was clearly stated and the teacher by skilful drip-feeding of a video clip encouraged the pupils to think through their own reactions to seeing someone breaking into a car and to consider different aspects of faith in action. Her questioning was of a high order, it was well linked to a Biblical quotation about light and faith which was then explored by the use of a bowl and a candle. Pupils were encouraged to relate faith in action to their own experiences. They responded very well and through the use of a variety of resources developed their understanding during the course of the lesson. Standards in RE are high and in line with other subjects. Pupils of all abilities make similar progress in RE to other subjects. Planning is very thorough and the Discovery scheme which is being used is being adapted sensibly for the needs of the pupils and to ensure links are made across the curriculum with other subjects. Assessment opportunities are identified and moderation of marking and standards has taken place between classes. Although Christianity is the major religion studied there is an appropriate emphasis on other religions. Pupils show respect for these and their understanding is developed by visits to a mosque, synagogue and a Hindu temple. Work in books shows a variety of activities all of which have been carefully suited to the ages and abilities of the pupils. Marking is thorough with pupils being given helpful written and verbal feedback from their work. The subject is very well led by two coordinators who work well together, have good subject knowledge, have joint planning time and conduct work scrutiny and lesson observations. They keep themselves well informed by attending courses run by the Diocesan Board. They monitor the teaching of the subject and the curriculum very well.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision of how he wishes the school to develop as a church school. He is entirely focussed upon ensuring all children are valued in school and given the opportunity to achieve. In this he has been very successful. The results of his systematic surveys of the parents on the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school are overwhelmingly positive and highly supportive of the school. The headteacher is most ably supported by his deputy. Both are excellent role models of the values of the school and are constantly seeking ways in which the school can improve. Strategic planning and very thorough but well targeted improvement plans, which are accurately and carefully evaluated are key to the work of the headteacher. The school has addressed the actions from the previous inspection very thoroughly. The Governors are highly supportive of the school, they know it well, are frequent visitors and provide a good level of challenge but also excellent strong pastoral support. They are determined to maintain the church school distinctiveness and to develop it further. They keep themselves up to date with training. The links with St Simon and St Jude and with other churches in the Benefice are very well established. The school uses the church extensively and plans to do so more when it is refurbished. The pupil 'Young Foundation Governors' contribute well to these links even to attending the Annual Parish meeting. Pupils' work is displayed in church and the parochial church council are kept well informed of the work of the school. Staff development has been a high priority for the school and two deputy headteachers have become headteachers, one of a church school. Links with Diocesan Board are strong and there is much collaborative working with other schools.