



St Mary's, Church of England, Primary School

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report

Type of School	Primary	School address	Petworth Road
Status	Voluntary Aided		Chiddingfold
Unique Reference Number	125166		GU8 4UF
Diocese	Guildford		
LEA	Surrey		
Date of last inspection	09/12/03	Headteacher	Mr P Bull

Inspection date Tuesday, February 12th 2008
National Society Inspector Mr A Rickett (NSI 201)

The Education Act 2005 (Section 48) requires the governing body or foundation governors of Church of England Schools to appoint a person to undertake the inspection of denominational education and collective worship in schools with a religious character. The inspection process follows a similar pattern to the new Ofsted inspection format.



Diocese of Guildford

Diocese of Guildford

Description of the school

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled School is an average size one form entry primary school. The socio-economic background of most children is generally favourable. The majority of children come from a white British heritage. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average.

Summary Judgement

St Mary's, Voluntary Aided School is a good church school. It is a community in which God is made real to the children and where they can talk openly about their beliefs. It is an environment in which all members of the community treat each other with trust.

Established strengths

- A community where everyone feels able to express their faith openly.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on trust.
- A commitment to developing the whole child.

Focus for development

- Create opportunities for pupils to engage in Religious Education at a deeper level.
- Involve pupils in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

An outstanding feature of St Mary's is that pupils talk comfortably about their beliefs and openly share views about how they perceive God and the place that He has in their lives. Pupils accept the reality of God and trust that their views will be listened to with respect by both their peers and adults. This is a reflection of the very high level of mutual respect which is an intrinsic part of the Christian ethos. Pupils are articulate and can express themselves with confidence and a considerable degree of maturity. For example, in one lesson a child reflecting on St Paul's letter to the Corinthians began to explain the relationship between faith and conscience. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and can explain that the motivation for living their lives according to such moral principles is because Jesus taught people how to do this. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and approach their learning with great enthusiasm because they appreciate being cared for as an individual. Standards of attainment are high throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress and the school has identified the need to ensure that able pupils in particular receive the right level of challenge. The School Council provides children with a voice through which they can raise their concerns. It is an important part of the school and has led to changes which have enhanced the quality of school life. Relationships between the school and the village community are excellent. Together with the church they form a very strong bond.

Through its distinctive Christian character the school makes outstanding provision at meeting the needs of all learners.

Grade 1

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

One of the many strengths of worship is the close liaison between the worship coordinator and Rector. Together they prepare and deliver acts of worship that contain clear messages which are made relevant to the lives and experiences of the pupils. Because they are delivered in language which is accessible to all pupils, worship is inclusive and engages pupils of all ages. The school has identified how it intends to make the messages more consistently rooted in Biblical teaching. Pupils say that worship is a special time in the life of the school. They enjoy coming together and understand that it is a time to learn about Jesus and how He taught people to lead their lives. The school has identified the need to involve pupils in the evaluation of worship. Pupils who profess not to have a faith say that they nevertheless appreciate this special time which gives them the opportunity to reflect on important questions about life. Pupils experience a wide variety of worship styles either as a whole school, in key stages as well as the intimacy of small class groups. Pupils respond well to prayer with appropriate reverence and are confident in responding with 'Amen' at the end. A wide range of prayers are used and a particularly spiritual moment occurs when the entire school joins hands towards the end of worship to say 'The Peace'. A candle is lit as pupils enter the hall and they were able to explain how the flame represents Jesus as the light of the world. The church is used regularly to celebrate festivals and this reinforces understanding of the importance of festivals in the Christian calendar.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

The impact of collective worship is good

Grade 2

How effective is the religious education?

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good. Careful thought has been given to presenting learning experiences in creative ways. Pupils enjoy these activities and engage in them with enthusiasm. They say that they like expressing their views through art and drama and that they value the opportunities to talk about different faiths and what they mean to people. They also appreciate that RE is made real to them by using material which relates to their own experiences. Attitudes are very positive and pupils approach the subject with a willingness to learn and participate. Good teaching was seen in lessons where the pace kept pupils engaged and immediate feedback focused their attention on what they had to do next. Very good teaching involved questioning at a high level which challenged them to engage at a deeper level and encouraged them to explore a greater understanding of religious concepts. Pupils' knowledge is good and they possess a vocabulary which allows them to express their views coherently and with a maturity beyond their years. For example in a lesson that looked at how Jesus helped Zacchaeus, a very young child explained how it is difficult to stop doing something when you have learnt how to do it the wrong way. The school has identified the need to create more of these opportunities for pupils to engage at this level. Standards are good overall and compare well with other core subjects. Once sufficient data has been collected, a recently introduced assessment system will make it easier to more clearly track progress.

The effect of religious education is good

Grade 2

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

The headteacher is an exemplary role model as someone who reflects the school's Christian ethos. He leads the school with a clear vision that demands the highest academic and personal standards from all those involved in the school. The whole community recognizes his commitment to enhancing the school's Christian status. The governors share this passion to reflect continually on the impact of the Christian character of the school and to identify how it can be even more effective. This was evidenced by the recent review of the anti bullying policy in which staff and governors looked specifically at how Christian principles of forgiveness and reconciliation should be a vital part. Foundation governors, among others, have a good understanding of how the school's distinctive foundation can make a difference to the lives of the children in the growth of their spiritual dimension and as a support to their learning. Close links between governors and the parish church have created a strong bond. This is reflected through spiritual links such as the inclusion of children's prayers as part of everyday church life. The Rector plays a particularly important role in the life of the school. This is recognized by the children who regard her as a familiar figure around school through leading worship regularly and in her pastoral role. There are also strong links with other churches in the village which make a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the school through leading acts of worship and in their support for the RE curriculum. The RE Coordinator is highly committed and knowledgeable about the subject. She has a vision and enthusiasm that has given the subject a high priority in the curriculum. She has developed an assessment system that allows teachers to identify progress as well as inform pupil progress. The deputy headteacher coordinates collective worship and regards this as an important priority.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are good
Grade 2

*Voluntary Aided schools only