



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **St Mark's Church of England (Aided) Primary**

Manor Road

Brighton

BN2 5EA

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Satisfactory**

**Diocese: Chichester**

Local authority: Brighton and Hove

Dates of inspection: 14 March 2016

Date of last inspection: April 2010

School's unique reference number: 114545

Headteacher: Jane Fendley

Inspector's name and number: Rosemary Appleby 749

#### **School context**

St Mark's CE (Aided) Primary is a smaller than the average size primary school in an urban setting with 203 pupils on roll. Over half the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is significantly higher than the national average, as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is below the national average. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language has increased rapidly with a significant proportion of these pupils in the nursery. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted in 2015.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mark's CE (Aided) Primary as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

- There is a strong, effective and nurturing Christian community which ensures that everyone is valued as an individual for their achievements.
- The drive and commitment of the headteacher and governing body has improved outcomes for all pupils.
- All stakeholders are articulate when describing the benefit of the school's Hero values which effectively increases spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) outcomes for all stakeholders.

#### **Areas to improve**

- For all stakeholders to understand where the school's Christian values are rooted and to articulate how they explicitly impact on their daily lives.
- Improve the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation of St Mark's as a church school by creating more rigorous systems that ensure actions lead to improvements across the school.
- For the agreed syllabus of religious education to be implemented. This must impact upon the development of religious education (RE) as a core subject where robust assessment systems and secure teacher knowledge improve outcomes for all pupils.

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

This is an improving church school where there has been a strong focus on driving up attainment. Although outcomes remain below national expectations, data shows an upward trend illustrating that attainment is catching up with national expectations. St Mark's school effectively provides an inclusive environment where the needs of all pupils are met. It is less clear how explicit Christian values are impacting on the daily life of learners. The school community is secure in the knowledge that the school's HERO values of hope, energy, resilience and optimism are raising pupils' self-esteem through teamwork, but is not secure in explaining how they explicitly relate to Christian values. Pupils can relate the HERO value of resilience to the fact that 'Jesus never gave up' and hope to the fact that 'Jesus had hope and faith in people'. The caring ethos of the school is underpinned by providing their community with a breakfast club, a room for community groups to use, running a positive parenting programme, weekly coffee mornings for parents and provision for family learning groups. Parents say that at St Mark's 'a problem shared is a problem solved'. Pupils could relate the giving of money to charities such as Africa, Rocking Horse and Air Ambulance with Jesus helping feed the five thousand. Pupils learn about other religions in RE and through this work pupils have compassion and respect for other cultures and know that you can help others to have a better life through charity work. Pupils link learning about other cultures and beliefs to the school's HERO value of respect for others. Displays around the school of Bibles, crosses, five finger prayers, saint of the month, and reflection areas in classes (focused on Easter) make a good contribution to SMSC, through reinforcing Christian symbolism and also contribute to the pupils' understanding of the Christian foundation of the school.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**

Collective worship is a distinct time in the school day and pupils are proud of the altar cloth that they have made. Pupils are respectful through participation in worship such as singing, lighting the candle and praying. Aspects of Anglican worship such as gather, engage, respond and send are well established and pupils know that the candle is lit to show that Jesus is the light of the world. A reflection song is sung to signal the time for quiet reflection. Pupils say that they value reflection time where they can 'think about God and pray'. In recent pupil interviews pupils said that worship was special because they had time to 'think about Jesus' and 'everyone gets together' promoting an inclusive community experience. The service at St George's parish church celebrating Easter appropriately extends the opportunity for worship and is well attended by parents. The vicar regularly leads worship at the school and is known well by the school community. Interactive reflection areas in each classroom increase the growth of spirituality by providing a quiet place to pray, read the Bible and to write prayers such as 'Dear God please help the poor in hospital'. Older pupils lead services in St George's Church for Easter, Christmas, Harvest and Y6 leavers. The person of Jesus Christ is evident in collective worship. Pupils write their own thoughtful prayers for inclusion in worship to parents and for the prayer box in the hall. The five finger prayers, which are individually written by pupils, provide them with a scaffolding to pray for loved ones, teachers, those in authority, those suffering and lastly themselves. Pupils have a growing understanding of the Trinity and know that that some Christians make the sign of the cross during a blessing, while naming the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. There is no consistent and formal approach to monitoring collective worship to identify priorities to improve collective worship experiences for pupils. Planning is detailed and appropriate but is not contributed to by a variety of stakeholders.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

The school has recently chosen to follow the Guildford Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education but has not yet embedded this in the curriculum. A recent RE day built around the Easter story increased pupil and staff understanding of creative ways to teach RE and parents talked about their children coming home and discussing this day excitedly. The community Christian group City Mission effectively supported the RE day and beautiful crosses made from each child's small cross, created on the day, can be seen around the school. A quality RE display with the biblical quote; 'The Kingdom of

heaven is like treasure hidden in a field: Matthew 13.44' asks pupils 'What is important that has not cost you money? Pupils' answers include 'Jesus last breath', 'hugging', loving' and friendship'. Pupils' reflective answers illustrate their ability to reflect on 'big questions'. Pupils were able to talk about the Easter story and recall Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. An exciting tray of items related to Christian symbolism at Easter prompted a pupil to recall that the cross on hot cross buns reminds us of Jesus dying on a cross and that Easter symbolises new life. Listening to music with appropriate visual pictures of chicks led engaged and enthusiastic pupils to link the chicks to 'Jesus and new life' and the Christian festival of Easter. Where RE teaching is effective it adds to pupils' spiritual growth through discussions about their emotions and fears. Learning about Hinduism in the nursery class and a visit by Y5 to a Hindu temple was explained by pupils to their parents who value the fact that pupils respect all cultures and are 'never negative'. Pupils learn about Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism but have not yet explored Christianity as a world faith. The RE leader monitors RE provision and is eager to improve the outcomes for pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of RE is not yet firmly embedded and the inconsistency of the quality and quantity of work in RE books means that RE standards are not always at the same level as other core subjects. Teacher knowledge is not always secure when teaching RE.

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

Leadership is driven by the school's mission statement of 'Aim High, Believe and Achieve' linked to the HERO values, which include the Christian values of respect and hope. Christian values, although not always explicitly expressed, underpin and have an evident positive impact on the school's approach to relationships, the children's well-being and attitudes towards learning. The leadership team is committed to ensuring that every pupil is enabled to use their God given gifts and ensure that the Christian values of hope and respect are embedded in the daily life of the school. The headteacher and chair of governors share a vision for the school where the HERO values are linked to explicit Christian values and all stakeholders will be enabled to articulate how they impact on their daily lives. Governors are committed to the Christian ethos of the school and support the school well. The local church community raise funds for the school and clergy lead regular worship in school and are well known by parents and pupils. Parents speak positively about the school and the inclusive care and nurture that raise their children's self-esteem. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Christian ethos are not yet sufficiently rigorous in identifying areas for future improvement. During recent monitoring of RE a need was identified to raise the profile of RE as a core subject with plans to resource additional RE training for staff and give a priority in the school development plan to the improvement of RE and outcomes for pupils. The school plans to use the current school's de-tracker system to ensure that RE assessment is brought in line with other core subjects. The governors' ethos and provision committee has recently discussed diversity learning walks and how to report back monitoring to all governors. Governors have plans to revise the terms of reference for this committee to reflect their commitment and responsibility to improvement of Christian distinctiveness across the school. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report March 2016 St Mark's CE (Aided) Primary Brighton BN2 5EA