



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane  
Coldwaltham  
Pullborough  
RH20 1LW

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Satisfactory

**Diocese:** Chichester

Local authority: West Sussex

Dates of inspection: 9 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 1 October 2009

School's unique reference number: 125987

Headteacher: Jon Gilbert

Inspector's name and number: Julie Burnett-Kirk 748

#### School context

St James is a rural village school of 53 pupils, mainly white British, taught in three classes. Pupils come from the surrounding area of Coldwaltham and Pullborough. The proportion of children who have special educational needs is above the national average and no children are currently eligible for pupil premium. The parish church is adjacent to the school. St James works in collaboration with Amberley school sharing a headteacher. The headteacher began in September 2014.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Close relationships with the parish vicar and the church make a valuable contribution to the school
- The Christian character of the school supports the social and moral development of all learners to create a caring ethos in the school.
- The school has an inclusive approach, which has enabled children to have a good understanding of differences and diversity, treating everyone with respect and consideration.

#### Areas to improve

- Identify Christian values relevant to the school context and weave these into the life of the school so that they have an impact on children's spiritual development
- Use the school's new Christian values as referred to in the previous point, to create a vision and action plan for the school as a church school so that it makes a difference to the achievement and wellbeing of all learners.
- Improve the self-evaluation process to determine the impact of worship and religious education (RE) on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) of the children.
- Ensure there is a long term plan for RE that will contribute to the Christian character of the school.

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

There is an ethos of kindness, thoughtfulness and respect noticeable in the behaviour and attitude of the children, linked to the Christian character of the school. Biblical stories and collective worship themes are used to help shape the good relationships in the school community and the wellbeing of the learners. Children, parents and governors all refer favourably to the strong buddy system and care shown by the older children for the younger children, which permeates the school. For example, the parents described situations where children 'still look out for one another even when they have moved to secondary school.' Children have a good understanding of differences and diversity through disability awareness projects and the school uses resources well to ensure children are aware of national and global communities, as well their own community. The school's self-evaluation and data show that pupils' attainment and progress is improving in KS1 and KS2. Children with special educational needs are well cared for and supported. Although Christian values have been used to influence the weekly themes chosen for worship, there is little evidence of impact on children's personal and spiritual development. Conversations with children, observation of RE lessons and work in the children's RE books shows an emphasis on learning about religion rather than children learning from religion and applying it to their lives. This has limited the impact of RE on children's spiritual development and on the Christian character of the school.

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

The school uses 'Values for Life' programme to support their planning for collective worship, which has given children an understanding of Jesus Christ and stories from the Bible. Children especially enjoy singing and value times of quiet at the beginning and end of worship. For example, children explained that when they look at the candle it gives them time to 'think about God in silence' and 'time to think about what we have done and what we have achieved'. Children value their church and enjoy their weekly worship in the church with the parish vicar. Older pupils have been able to develop their understanding of Christian beliefs through fortnightly discussion times in class with the vicar. Children ask the vicar questions such as "so tell me how does one person dying save everyone from their sins?" They have some understanding of the trinity. Parents regularly attend and enjoy the weekly church service and fortnightly celebration worship, as well as the special services in the church (an issue from the previous inspection). There are some opportunities for prayer during the school day and classes are beginning to develop prayer trees and collections of prayers, but there is a limited impact on the spiritual development of the children. There has been little monitoring and evaluation of worship, which was a key area for action at the previous inspection. Consequently, the school hasn't identified clearly their strengths and priorities for action so that worship can make a difference to the lives of the whole school community.

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

There is a strong sense of belonging and care in the school, which is clearly demonstrated by the staff and governors and valued by the parents. However, the vision and aims of the school as a church school are not clear and do not make the distinctive Christian character explicit. The school has taken actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning and these actions are having an impact on the standards of achievement and wellbeing of the children. Areas for development from the last SIAMS report have been partly addressed but not all aspects are yet established practice in the school. For example the issue to 'review the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) policy as the basis for maximising opportunities for spiritual and cultural development' hasn't happened. The arrangements for collective worship meet statutory requirements but the time allocated for RE is not sufficient.. The governors are involved in the school; however their role doesn't extend to monitoring the impact of worship and RE or the

Christian distinctiveness of the school. The school is developing the leadership potential of new staff. The vicar meets regularly with the headteacher to plan worship, visit classrooms and to teach RE and is well known and respected by the parents, children and staff. The school has good relationships with the parents who appreciate that the school 'values each pupil for who they are and celebrates all they achieve.'

SIAMS report November 2015 St James CE VC Primary School Coldwaltham RH20 ILW