



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Vernham Dean, Andover

Hampshire SPI 1 0JY

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Winchester

Local authority: Hampshire

Dates of inspection: 17 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 9 November 2010

School's unique reference number: 116321

Interim headteacher: Katy Thompson

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Vernham Dean Gillum's is smaller than the average size primary school with 88 children on roll and in a rural setting. The catchment area reflects the broad social and economic mix of the backgrounds of the children. The majority of children come from a white British heritage. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the number entitled to receive the pupil premium. Attendance is above the national average. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an interim headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Vernham Dean Gillum's as a Church of England school are good

- An explicit set of core Christian values make an impact on the personal development of children and are increasingly contributing to outcomes in their learning.
- Improvements to collective worship mean that acts of worship now have greater meaning to all members of the school community.
- The commitment of school leaders ensures that the school is moving forward as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Improve the impact of collective worship by empowering children to have a greater involvement in the way that worship themes are explored.
- Deepen the impact of the opportunities to develop the children's spiritual awareness by ensuring that there is a consistently high quality to the questions that challenge the children's understanding of what they are learning across the whole curriculum.
- Develop the skills of leaders and managers to monitor and evaluate the growing impact of core values and spirituality in all areas of school life.

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

The identification of a set of three core values has given the Christian ethos a greater sense of purpose to the whole school community. Children and adults are exploring what they mean to them personally and to the life of the school. This is an ongoing process but the school has made good progress in a relatively short time to share the values with the whole school community and give children an understanding of what they mean. An underpinning of the three values through an understanding of the Trinity helps children to appreciate the Christian nature of the values. Children are beginning to make links between the values. They articulate how different interpretations of Bible stories for example, can show love, hope or courage depending on how you view that story. The school is beginning to link these Christian values with a set of learning values but these are at a less well developed stage. However, both sets of values contribute to the positive classroom environment and the above average outcomes in the children's learning. The school has made good progress in developing a shared understanding of spirituality and this is increasingly becoming a more overt part of the learning culture of the school. The introduction of explicit times for children to discuss philosophical issues is also enhancing the development of their spiritual awareness. Links between the values, spirituality and what the children are learning is growing but this needs to be at a consistently high level of challenge throughout the curriculum and particularly in religious education. The quality of relationships in the school is very good. Children treat each other with respect and listen and share their views and opinions in an atmosphere of trust. Parents feel that the school allows their children to explore matters of faith and belief openly so that they come to their own view. Children have a high level of appreciation that moral issues might not have simple answers and understand the difference between right and wrong. They appreciate that Britain is a diverse society and that there is a need to respect everyone regardless of faith and culture.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of worship are distinct times in the school day that children say allows them to think about Bible stories and have time to pray. Children also appreciate that this is an important part of being a church school because, as one child explained, 'it is all about God'. Collective worship has improved since the previous inspection. Changes to the approach mean that there is now a stronger sense of it being important to the whole school community. For example, attendance by all staff and the encouragement of parents to come to worship has created more of a family feel. Planning is explicitly based on the three core values and underpinned by Bible teaching. Innovative newsletters to parents help families to understand the themes and how they are being explored in worship. Children are beginning to contribute to these newsletters by writing their own prayers. Themes are explored over a number of weeks through questions that help to give them a clear focus. Class based worship enables teachers to help explore these questions in greater depth at an age appropriate level. Children have not yet been challenged to think for themselves how they would like to explore these questions and their own interpretation of how Bible stories reflect the core values. Prayer plays an important part in the school day and reflection areas in all classrooms, and the school prayer board, give children good opportunities to write and share their own prayers and they do so with confidence. They have a secure understanding that prayer is a time to talk to God or Jesus and appreciate that they are not always answered in the way that they might say in their prayer. Children are becoming increasingly confident to say spontaneous prayers. Children respond well in worship. They are attentive and show an appropriate reverence when it is time to pray and be still. They have some opportunities to regularly plan and lead acts of worship and some monitoring has been carried out. The RE leader also has responsibility for collective worship. She has an excellent grasp of how worship is at the heart of being a church school and the contribution it makes to the children's understanding of themselves,

relationships with others, the world around them and bigger questions about life and meaning.

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

The interim headteacher, very ably supported by the RE leader and senior staff, has ensured that in the short time she has been in post, the school's Christian ethos has been given a greater sense of purpose and direction. It is now securely good and leaders and managers have a good capacity to continue to develop in innovative ways as a church school. The headteacher and RE leader both have a very clear grasp of what needs to be done to move forward. This is particularly so with regard to their understanding of how connections between the different aspects of being a church school link together and therefore create greater impact. There are thorough procedures in place that accurately evaluate the impact of the Christian ethos. Strengths and areas for improvement have been identified and form part of an overall school development plan and a separate church school plan. Visits to other church schools, arranged through the school's beneficial links with the diocese, have given leaders the opportunity to learn how to develop their school but in their own way. Governors are fully supportive of the leadership's vision to grow as a church school and are involved in some monitoring. The skills they need to monitor and then evaluate the evidence gathered have not yet been fully developed. Governors are closely involved in the life of the school. The school is making excellent efforts to build closer links with the local community. The school also appreciates the links with the local church community and highly values the occasions when they celebrate Christian festivals in the church. The contribution of the local lay pastor in leading worship on a regular basis is an integral part of the life of the school for children and adults. The RE and worship leader makes a key contribution to the successful progress being made to bring the Christian ethos more alive for the whole school community. She has a commitment and passion towards developing the personal spirituality of each child and adult in school. The school meets the requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report November 2015 Vernham Dean Gillum's CE VC Primary School Ryde Andover SPI I 0JY