



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

West Malling Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School and Language Unit (academy)

Old Cricket Ground
Norman Road
West Malling
ME19 6RL

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 27 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 23 February 2010

School's unique reference number: 138737

Headteacher: Matthew Clark

Inspector's name and number: Richard Tyson 787

School context

West Malling Church of England primary school is a smaller than average sized primary school. The school includes the McGinty Language Centre which delivers specialist provision for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. This is because all pupils in the Language Centre have statements of special educational needs. The current headteacher has only been in post since January 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of West Malling as a Church of England school is outstanding

- Christian values are embedded into the life of the school.
- Shaped by Christian values, pupils can grow in confidence and character.
- The school is an inclusive school in which all are aware of their innate value and worth. Guided by these Christian values, school leaders have substantially improved achievement and attendance of pupils so that most achieve at or above national standards
- Collective worship is an integral part of the life of school.
- The incumbent provides invaluable Christian insights to support the work of the school.

Areas to improve

- To provide more opportunities for students to lead in collective worship so that they have ownership of and pride in this aspect of school life
- To ensure that school leaders embed a clear assessment policy for Religious Education (RE) which is successfully implemented by all teachers and understood by pupils

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

The Christian values of the school are deeply embedded into the daily life of the school: staff, pupils, parents and governors can readily articulate the values. School leaders find fresh ways of articulating these values so that values are not just assumed. They are able to give examples of the impact values make on the daily lives of the pupils. For example, teachers speak of how they use the values of endurance and perseverance to support pupils. They do so inspired by their distinctive Christian insights into the meaning of those values. This determined approach has led to strategic thinking that has helped ensure that the achievement of students has improved rapidly in recent years. The majority of students make expected progress including vulnerable students. The school actively promotes and ensures good attendance. Pupils in the specialist language unit are effectively included in the school community for lessons, including, RE, as well as for collective worship. Governors and school leaders have provided exceptionally pro-active leadership in addressing, successfully, particularly challenging cases of poor attendance. Their pioneering leadership, shaped by Christian insight, has been successful in substantially improving the school's attendance since the previous academic year. Through the formal and extra-curricular programme, opportunities are taken to ensure that the Christian character of the school has a high profile. An example of this is the recent art day. Such opportunities help to ensure that staff and students are able to keep a fresh and deep understanding of the school's Christian values. One way in which pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed effectively is through engagement with local charities. Understanding of national and global communities is currently less developed. The well taught and well organised RE curriculum leads to students responding enthusiastically and being keen to learn. Pupils are able to explain the ways in which their understanding of RE has helped them think about moral and spiritual issues. Parents also value this important aspect of RE. Pupils are also aware of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

All members of the school community recognise the importance of worship in the life of the school. Pupils can relay with enthusiasm ways in which worship has helped them to raise their aspirations and look to becoming better people. Indeed, the values of the school are regularly referred to through worship. This experience has played an important role in the development of pupil character and confidence. Similarly, parents value the structure of worship and how it encourages their children to think about important moral and spiritual issues. The incumbent has been able to play a pivotal role in supporting the new headteacher. Together they are beginning to develop pupils' understanding of different Christian traditions and an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils have a rich experience of worship and value the opportunity for the moments of reflection, prayer and singing that it provides. Worship is well organised so that the church year and Christian festivals are celebrated. Worship includes biblical material and the centrality of Jesus Christ is acknowledged. The application of both to pupils' lives is not consistently direct nor is it fully understood. Pupils are beginning to take a more active role in helping to lead aspects of worship. They value the opportunities that they are given to lead the school in prayer.

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

Leaders consistently articulate and live out a vision rooted in Christian values. This consequently underpins their very thorough understanding of the school's performance. Leaders' monitoring and evaluation of student progress are forensic in their attention to detail, enabling students to flourish. Where there is underachievement, leaders and teachers intervene decisively and quickly to secure better outcomes for students. They do so prompted by their Christian understanding of the innate worth of each child in the school community. Indeed, the school's thorough evaluation of its priorities reveals the ambition that leaders have for each child to

benefit from a Church of England education. Governors are an integral part of this evaluation process. They are well informed, hold leaders to account and have high ambitions for the school to develop further. This ensures that leadership is wise and continually seeks ways to build capacity for the future leadership of church schools. For example, through the relatively recent appointment of the headteacher and his deputy, a clear strategic priority has been made to ensure the continued centrality of Christian values, worship and the teaching of RE. Parents and the local church make a very full contribution to the life of the school so that pupils' education is fully supported. With regular meetings of the parents' council as well as weekly celebration assemblies and services held in the church, there are formal opportunities for parents to be actively involved in their child's education. The progress and assessment of pupils in RE requires more clarity of definition to ensure that pupils know how to improve. The culture of this school, created by school leaders, means that all feel part of a learning community grounded in Christian values. There are high aspirations for all. Pupils therefore have the opportunity to thrive.

SIAMS report March 2015 West Malling Church of England Primary School ME19 6RL