



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **Brenchley and Matfield VA Church of England Primary School**

Brenchley Road

Tonbridge

Kent

TN12 7NY

**Diocese: Rochester**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Date of last inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2010

School's unique reference number: 118714

Headteacher: Mrs Rachel Green

Inspector's name and number: Mr Steven Gallears

#### **School context**

The school is smaller than most primary schools - 188 pupils on roll with capacity for 210. Pupils at the school are mainly white British and there is a much smaller than average number of pupils from various ethnic groups. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also lower than average. There are close ties with the two local Churches, All Saints' and St Luke's. The school has a part time Chaplain and both Vicars fully and actively support the school. There have been changes in leadership and management since the last inspection, three years ago. The Headteacher has been in post for 2 ½ years.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brenchley and Matfield as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The five core Christian Values of the school are fully embedded and have impact on all stakeholders; pupils understand that the roots of these are in the teachings of Jesus.
- Prayer has high profile in the school and pupils use and value the numerous opportunities provided.
- All areas for development from the previous SIAS report have been met; the school has made significant improvements since its last inspection.
- The Headteacher and all school leaders have a clear Christian vision. This shapes and impacts upon all that they do.
- The school's self-evaluation is thorough, insightful and robust.

#### **Areas to improve**

- In Religious Education (RE), assessment procedures need to be fully embedded. Teachers need to be able to tell all learners what they need to do to improve.
- In RE lessons, planning should allow for activities which challenge the more able in order to raise their achievement.

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

Five core Christian Values rooted in the teachings of Jesus are at the heart of everything this school does. They are fully embedded and evident throughout the school building and all stakeholders can articulate what they mean and how they have impact on them. These values are part of the staff code of conduct with all who work in the school required to “promote and adhere to the core Christian Values”. Pupils regularly use them in the classroom; they support achievement and excellent behaviour. One pupil commented that using the core values made “people nicer to one another”. The school’s values help pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding; they often use these when deciding on actions to take. Data provided shows that a trend of good attainment in both key stages is in place. There is evidence that many learners, including the vulnerable groups, make at least expected progress. The schools values have driven significant improvement in pupils’ achievement. Prayer plays a significant role in school life, this is a reflective community. Pupils are keen to express their beliefs and have a high degree of understanding and respect for others. Those of Christian, other or no faith backgrounds are fully welcomed. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to learn about others through visits, speakers and in their Religious Education (RE) lessons. RE plays a significant role in shaping and developing pupils understanding of the core Christian Values; this was evident in lessons observed and in pupil books.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

All stakeholders place great value on Collective Worship. Pupils talk very positively about it and use what they have learnt throughout the school day. The school has a weekly ‘Life and Soul’ club which gives pupils the opportunity to reflect upon the messages from Collective Worship; this also gives staff the opportunity to reflect and pray. Prayer spaces are available in all classrooms and elsewhere; pupils understand and embrace prayer as a means to develop their own spiritual journey. The school employs an inspirational part-time Chaplain and the Incumbent regularly visits the school to deliver Collective Worship. Coupled with full governor support and a dedicated team of school leaders, Collective Worship is inclusive, well planned and engages all learners. There is a ‘Spiritual Development’ committee led by a foundation governor; this has helped shape a comprehensive Collective Worship policy and has led to extensive and accurate monitoring and evaluation. Collective Worship is distinctly Anglican in practice; pupils are received with the greeting “the Lord be with you”, there are biblical readings and prayers. At the end of Worship, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon the message and there is a blessing. The school celebrates the major Christian festivals. Pupils freely talk about these and how much they enjoy celebrating them. Pupils understand the centrality of Jesus. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are very much part of Worship and some pupils have a sound understanding of the Trinity. Worship encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own charitable social action, a recent example being a Harvest collection for an international charity based in Ghana.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Standards of attainment in RE are broadly in line with schools nationally with some attaining higher. Pupils understand the value of RE and they learn well. One pupil commented “I enjoy RE lessons, that’s my best lesson of the day”. Teaching is good. Pupils are given a variety of tasks which allow them to ‘learn about and from religions’, they behave well and ask interesting and insightful questions, a learner commented “sometimes the ideas are quite hard and complicated in RE”. At present, planning for pupils of different abilities is mostly based on outcome rather than task in lessons. This is stopping above average learners from accessing the skills which will enable pupils to think more deeply about religious ideas which in turn would raise their attainment. Formal assessment procedures are now in place and are in the process of being fully embedded by teachers. This has yet to have full impact on raising learners’ attainment. RE has a high profile within the school curriculum; the introduction of a

parents and staff handbook for RE has helped develop this. The subject leader for RE has a clear vision and strategy to develop RE. Monitoring and evaluation of RE is in place, it is robust, accurate and consistent. RE makes a good contribution to the school's core values. Learners display a secure knowledge of key Christian teachings (the curriculum places a significant emphasis on Christianity) and the beliefs of other faiths. One pupil commented "I really like learning about other religions".

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

The school is led by an inspirational Headteacher. Along with the Governing Body and senior leadership team there is a commitment to deliver the best Christian education for all pupils. All 'live' out and promote a shared Christian vision. This shared mission to allow all pupils to "see and experience the relevance of Christ" is readily articulated by leaders. The school has an insightful and robust process of self-evaluation. All leaders know how the pupils are doing and what needs to be developed in the future. There is a passion amongst leaders to continue improving. Through effective strategic governance, the Headteacher has developed a whole school curriculum which is distinctively Christian. RE and Collective Worship meet statutory requirements. Pupils' behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are shaped by this Christian vision. Parents are supportive of this; a recent survey reported that 100% believed their children were happy in school and that it was well led and managed. They also fully support the school's Christian ethos; this was evident in a specific survey given to parents relating to the distinctive Christian nature of the school. The school has excellent links with the two local Parish churches and is committed to working with schools in the local area. The school also works closely with the Diocese and has benefitted from Diocesan support especially within the Governing body.

SIAMS report [October 2013] [Brenchley and Matfield VA Primary School, Kent] [TN12 7NY]