



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **St George's Church of England (Voluntary Aided) School**

Meadow Road,  
Gravesend,  
Kent,  
DA11 7LS

**Previous SIAS grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Rochester

Local authority: n/a

Date of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Date of last inspection: January 2010

School's unique reference number: 137609

Headteacher: Anne Southgate

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

#### **School context**

St George's is an averaged sized Anglican academy. Its students come from a range of Christian denominations: around 25% have a Sikh family heritage. The number from Eastern European backgrounds has increased recently. The percentage with special educational needs or for whom pupil premium funding is received, due to social disadvantage, is higher than average. As a non-selective institution in a selective area, many enter the academy with below average attainment. Most leave having made good progress. St George's prides itself on being an inclusive church academy – 'a Christian school, rather than a school just for Christians'.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The improved prominence given to the Christian ethos and values which has led to improved standards, high aspiration and a commitment to ensuring that all succeed.
- The very good progress made in addressing issues from the previous denominational inspection report especially the improvement in the range and quality of worship and the contribution it makes to students' personal, spiritual and moral development.
- The students' very positive attitudes and behaviour, reflecting academy values which supports them in becoming confident, independent learners who achieve well.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Embed recent religious education (RE) curriculum changes in Years 7 to 11 so that appropriate support and challenge is provided for all units of study to ensure that each student achieves, if not exceeds, their target grade.

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

St George's has successfully raised aspirations and attainment so that good progress is made despite many students having lower than average starting points. This is because individual needs are taken into account which are clearly related to the academy's motto of 'All different: All Equal'. This statement is outstandingly supported by the academy's explicit Christian values of compassion, hope, respect (for creation), service and thankfulness. There is an extremely clear vision for improving the life chances of students, seeing the 'unique value of each as a creature of God'. The values are exceptionally well known and articulated very clearly by young people and adults alike. They contribute effectively to students' well-being, regardless of ability or background. Relationships and behaviour, which are based on mutual respect, are exceptionally good. Students and staff attribute this to the important messages shared through the motto and values and reiterated across the academy. A number of students mentioned how important 'community' is and how, through 'community', there is a sense of love and service based on care and concern for all. The number of exclusions is below the national average due to effective support for vulnerable young people who are at risk of exclusion and for their families. This is clearly based on the academy's focus on service. Likewise, the effective strategies used to improve the attendance of a minority of students are clearly based on Christian principles. The academy celebrates a wide range of achievement. Consequently, it provides a balanced and effective curriculum and a wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips. These successfully support its Christian ethos and enhance students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. RE makes a good contribution to the academy's Christian character through both its curriculum content and learning activities that encourage reflection, tolerance and appreciation of diversity.

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

Worship takes place daily with very well developed themes, linked to explicit Christian values and the Church's year. Since the previous denominational inspection the key issues for the development of worship have been successfully addressed. Consequently, the breadth and depth of worship has improved significantly. It is very well planned and is led by a range of people including staff, governors, students, local Christian leaders and parents. Pupils and staff have a very positive attitude towards worship which is valued and enjoyed. The quality and variety provided through worship, including the reflection times in tutor groups, has a significant and positive impact on students' personal development and contributes to their spiritual and moral development extremely well. Students speak confidently of the importance of worship for the academy and for themselves. As one student said, "Our worship reflects our values and helps us develop spiritually". Meaningful and prayerful worship is presented in an inclusive way so that those of all faiths and none participate very well and benefit from it. This effectively reflects the school's motto and values. Elements of Anglican worship such as vesicles and responses and saying the Lord's Prayer are well established. Christian teaching and beliefs are explored appropriately.

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

Recent curriculum changes have refocused some units of work in Years 7 and 8. Improved time allocated for RE in Years 9 to 11 supports its status as a 'core' subject alongside English and Mathematics. These developments are appropriate in an academy with a Christian foundation. RE days and a religious studies option for study in the sixth form contribute well to sixth form students' spiritual and moral development. There is an appropriate balance across the academy between study which addresses Christianity and that which addresses world faiths, such as Sikhism and Judaism. There is a good balance between activities which help students to learn about religious beliefs and practices, and opportunities to relate that learning to their own lives. The department applied for and has been awarded a silver RE Quality Mark as external validation of its work. The department is well led by an experienced teacher who is new to middle management. Staff members are committed to ensuring that students enjoy RE and that they achieve appropriately. Consequently, lessons are well planned and the quality of teaching is often good and sometimes outstanding. Overall, students make good progress in RE

although, especially at GCSE level, the department falls short of the required percentage of pupils making the aspirational four levels of progress target. Students of all ages behave well and engage appropriately during lessons. They are able to work well together in groups. They are not afraid to share ideas or ask questions of their teacher and each other in order to improve their learning. Assessment strategies, including peer assessment, are used well to support learning. Careful and more detailed monitoring of progress in RE is developing in line with the academy's procedures and priorities.

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

The academy's very strong Christian foundation is very effectively promoted by the vision and dedication of the headteacher and her staff, in partnership with governors. It is extremely well understood and shared by students. This is because of the widespread and positive support for the academy's Christian ethos and values which is seen as an important driving force for improvement. The newly appointed Chaplain is already impacting positively on academy life as evidenced by many positive references to her work made by students. Senior leaders and governors have an accurate and clear understanding of where the academy is and what developments need to happen in order to further improve its Christian service to its students and their families. Leaders and managers effectively strive to provide a community where students are happy, can thrive and can succeed. Parents are involved as partners in the students' education and support the academy's inclusive ethos. Governors are strongly committed to the academy's development plan which is underpinned by its effectiveness and distinctiveness as a Church academy. They are supportively challenging through their regular meetings and involvement in academy life by, for example, being link governors to departments. The academy is committed to the professional development of all staff. Moreover, St George's is becoming increasingly outward looking and has a strong mission to serve the local community. This includes working well in partnership with local primary Church schools and with the diocese of Rochester. Arrangements for both worship and RE meet statutory requirements.

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