



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Windmill Street  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN2 4UU

**Diocese: Rochester**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Date of last inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009

School's unique reference number: 118614

Headteacher: Lynn Goreham

Inspector's name and number: Anne Southgate

Quality assurance: Lyn Field NS 151

#### **School context**

St Peter's is a small Voluntary Controlled primary school, split between three sites in the centre of Tunbridge Wells. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and a much smaller proportion than average, are supported by Pupil Premium funding. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is similar to the national average. The parish church is used extensively by the school for worship and other learning activities. Ofsted have recently judged the school to be outstanding.

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

- Outstanding achievement is driven by a shared understanding and commitment to Christian values.
- The honest determination of the headteacher to reach the highest standards is based firmly on a Christian vision for the school.
- The Christian values of kindness, forgiveness and respect lead to exceptionally good relationships between all members of the school community.
- Children's spiritual development is very strong.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Develop opportunities for pupils to lead worship
- Widen the groups of stakeholders consulted, so that they may contribute to the self-evaluation of the school as a Church school.

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

Clear Christian values are a driving force in school improvement. The values of courage and determination lead to a climate where all can take risks and expectations are high. Pupils relate these values to the work on learning mindsets, and they explain clearly why the school prayer has recently been revised to reflect the link between Christian values and learning. This means the school's Christian character has a significant impact on pupils' high levels of achievement. Relationships in the school are exemplary because everyone lives out the Christian values. A parent commented, 'the ethos affects children's behaviour as they are so familiar with the Christian values'. Pupils show the utmost courtesy, and this is particularly apparent in narrow corridors and in movement across the three sites. As a result, behaviour is outstanding. The use of Christian values means that disagreements are handled very well. Both parents and children recognise that teachers are excellent role models. Pupils' spiritual development is supported very well. Children think deeply, ask big questions and reflect on their attitudes, learning and behaviour. They gain a sense of awe and wonder from the whole curriculum. An example is art, where children have reflected on creation and the wonder of our world. Pupils are impressive in the way they use their knowledge of Bible stories to reflect on issues in their own lives. 'The Bible helps you whatever you believe because you can think quietly about how to deal with problems.' As a result their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely strong. Religious education (RE) books include spontaneously written prayers in response to the topic. Children are enthusiastic about the many opportunities they have to develop an understanding of diversity within the Church and in other faiths. One child said, 'even though not everyone believes the same, everyone respects the differences'.

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

Children and adults are active participants in collective worship, and pupils readily relate the themes to their own lives. One pupil commented, 'if a Bible story stays in your mind, it changes how you behave'. Children speak with excitement about their experience of active involvement in worship, and describe St Peter's as 'an activity church school'. There is a very strong partnership with the church, and children are wonderfully attentive during worship. Pupils' knowledge of biblical stories such as that of Abraham is impressive. The Bible is central to collective worship. Pupils have excellent knowledge of Christian beliefs, such as the Trinity, 'the Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son at Pentecost'. The school reflects the Anglican tradition of the church, but also ensures children experience a range of other Christian traditions. A wide range of worship leaders, visits to other churches, and participation in the Eucharist at Rochester Cathedral Schools' Festival give pupils a rich experience of worship. Pupils from different traditions feel included and there is a mutual respect for differences. Children make full use of the frequent opportunities to reflect. For example, the 'values response' worship on Fridays allows children to respond to the week's theme by producing a class drama or prayer. Displays show children's responses to worship themes, rather than being 'done by teachers'. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is increasingly effective, with suggestions such as varying the style of music being incorporated. A pupil group of 'Leading Lights' recently asked children what they had learnt from worship. A response was, 'your real treasures are your family and friends, not physical possessions'. Children's spiritual development is therefore exceptionally strong. The headteacher has rightly identified the need to involve more children in leading worship.

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

The headteacher is passionate about the Christian ethos of the school. She has a clear vision for how pupils should be equipped spiritually when they leave St Peter's. There is a strong

desire for each child to flourish in every way as a child of God. This leads to very high expectations, closely linked to Christian values. Self-evaluation is cautious as a result of uncompromising honesty and a rigorous determination to meet demanding criteria. Governors are fully involved in self-evaluation as a church school. However, other groups of stakeholders need to be involved more fully. Training provided by the diocese has enabled governors to consider the Christian thinking behind their decisions. Governors experience an ethos of openness and generosity, which ensures they are not afraid to ask questions and enables them to be an effective critical friend. All leaders are clear that their work is based firmly on distinctive Christian values. This leads to all being able to give as well as receive help to improve, and to a relentless focus on the progress of every child. There is very good support for the leader of RE. This has resulted in effective practice and impressive consistency across the school in delivering high quality RE. The partnership with the church is highly effective in deepening the experience of learners and services are well attended by parents. This helps the school to play a key role in the life of the community and to share the Christian values upon which the school is built.

SIAMS report June 2014 St Peter's Church of England VC School, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 4UU