



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Wateringbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

147 Bow Road, Wateringbury, Maidstone ME18 5EA

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Kent

Date of inspection: 11 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 14 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 118632

Headteacher: Chasey Crawford-Usher

Inspector's name and number: Steven Gallears 802

School context

Wateringbury is a one-form entry village school which draws from surrounding parishes. The majority of children are white British from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school draws from a settled traveller community. The school has undergone significant staff changes with a new headteacher appointed in January 2014 and a new deputy headteacher in September 2014. The school maintains close links with St John the Baptist Church. Although the incumbent retired in October 2015, other church members have been welcomed into school for worship and for special events. The headteacher attends a termly Parochial Church Council to establish church-school links for upcoming worship and school events.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wateringbury as a Church of England school are good

- The behaviour of pupils is welcoming, courteous and respectful of each other.
- Collective worship is engaging, gives pupils opportunities for reflection and is inclusive.
- The headteacher, supported by a committed team, has a clear Christian vision which has a positive impact on pupils' achievement, development and wellbeing.

Areas to improve

- Ensure greater engagement with parents on the Christian distinctiveness, ethos and values of the school.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate collective worship.
- Give pupils opportunities to formally assess their work so they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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

The school has developed a set of six core Christian values of love, peace, wisdom, justice forgiveness and compassion. These are 'lived out' by staff and are transmitted effectively to pupils. Many understand how these values help them in their daily lives. For example, when discussing forgiveness, pupils can link this to biblical stories and can articulate why it is important to forgive people. However, these are not fully embedded into all policies and practices in school. They have not been filtered through to all stakeholders, including some parents. These values and the school's ethos ensure that every child, irrespective of start point, fulfils their God given potential and talents. This, in turn, has contributed to the excellent attendance which is above the national average, very good behaviour for learning and a recent trend of very strong attainment and progress. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Children feel safe, cared for and loved. Pupils in year 5 and 6 help younger children in numerous ways including as reading buddies, play leaders and through the 'leading lights' initiative. This is appreciated by the younger pupils and helps the older children to learn key leadership skills. In some areas of school life, pupils have opportunities to develop their spirituality. They are encouraged to work together and to understand how their actions affect other people. They are challenged to explore and to develop their own beliefs. The school celebrates diversity and effectively challenges misconceptions. Pupils are clear that a Christian community is based on respect and tolerance of all and this is clearly communicated to parents. The school understands its Christian mission to help those in need locally, nationally and internationally. Links have been established with a local food bank and with a school in Syria. The school encourages all stakeholders to be socially responsible.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

A clear collective worship policy and yearly plan is in place and provides evidence of regular and varied worship. Pupils' behaviour and engagement during collective worship is very good. They are eager to participate and enjoy this time together. There is some pupil involvement in the planning and delivery of worship, including the work of the recently introduced 'leading lights' group. Leaders regularly monitor worship. This has resulted in a clear process of evaluation of practice and consequent changes where necessary. However, this process does not yet regularly involve pupils and parents. Collective worship is distinctively Anglican in structure. Pupils are welcomed and all can recite the school prayer and they sing with gusto. It is very clear that this structured worship pattern is familiar to pupils and that this is embedded in practice. Messages from collective worship are clearly delivered and are linked to the children's lives. Many can connect the school's values to the worship themes and to how they should act. There are prayer spaces in each classroom and in a central location which are used frequently by some pupils. Pupils say that they enjoy the space and time to pray and they know that this is an important part of their school life. They say that prayer spaces in each classroom help them to "talk to God" in either a private or public way. Many want their prayers read in worship and in their class groups.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils do well in RE. Their attainment is in line with national expectations. However, there is no evidence of pupils' work which consistently exceeds national averages. Pupils generally enjoy their RE lessons. They take pride in their work and they willingly contribute during class discussions. Behaviour in lessons is very good. The curriculum is well designed and gives pupils opportunities to learn about and from religions. Pupils have opportunities to learn about Christianity and other world faiths as well as developing their own spirituality through probing questions and activities in RE. It is clear that those of faith and those with no faith are included and that their beliefs are valued. One parent commented, "It's great to see that even though this is a Christian school, how respectful the school is to other religions". Pupils are taught and can use a range of subject specific skills and terminology. Pupils work very well together in

lessons and are encouraged to reflect and to think deeply. Assessment procedures are in place and they inform teaching and learning. Pupils find it difficult to articulate their present attainment in relation to the levels used by the school and what they need to do to improve. RE reinforces the school's Christian distinctiveness. For example, in year 6 lessons, pupils reflect on how religious art can help Christians develop an understanding of the nature of Christ. The subject leader for RE has a clear vision and strategy to develop RE. This is based on robust and consistent monitoring and evaluation conducted by herself, senior leaders and some governors. This has led to improvements in standards and attainment in RE.

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

The school's Christian vision is clearly articulated by all leaders with passion and with a common sense of purpose. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and has transformed the school's ethos over the past 2 years. There is a relentless striving to improve as a whole school community. A strong and committed team is now in place. There is a clear strategic vision from all leaders. The school's self-evaluation is insightful and robust and although there is still work to be done to make the school an outstanding church school, progress so far has been rapid. Areas for improvement from the previous SIAS inspection have been met. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. A newly appointed RE co-ordinator is raising the profile of the subject in the school. Initiatives like 'leading lights', close links with the Parochial Church Council, work with the local church schools' cluster and training for staff and governors are having a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing and academic progress. There is effective and strong governance. The fine line between support and challenge is in place. All stakeholders are engaged in the strategic development of the school. There are outstanding links with the local church. Pupils go to the church regularly especially during key Christian festivals. The school has excellent links with the wider community. Some recent appointments of staff at different levels of leadership in the school have started the process of preparing leaders of church schools for the future.

SIAMS report March 2016 Wateringbury CE Primary School ME18 5EA