



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **The Pilgrim Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Warwick Crescent, Borstal, Kent ME1 3LF

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Rochester**

Local authority: Medway

Dates of inspection: 5 February 2015

Date of last inspection: 2 November 2009

School's unique reference number: 134823

Headteacher: Janet Taylor

Inspector's name and number: Anne Southgate 820

#### **School context**

The Pilgrim School is a semi-urban, average sized primary school. It serves a varied catchment area with significant pockets of deprivation. The pupils are from predominantly white British backgrounds. Progress is above average, and those eligible for Pupil Premium achieve well. Attendance is higher than average. There are close ties with the local Anglican and Baptist churches. The school is over-subscribed.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the Pilgrim School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The headteacher is passionate about leading a church school, which serves the local community and allows all stakeholders to encounter Christianity.
- Christian values drive high achievement and good behaviour.
- The whole school community is very reflective and respectful of the views of others.

#### **Areas to improve**

- All school policies should make explicit the Christian principles which underpin them.

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

The Christian character of the school underpins and drives high achievement, attendance and wellbeing. The fact that this is a church school is very clear from the school's website and in the school buildings. This addresses an issue from the last inspection. The headteacher is passionate about the mission of the school to increase life chances for local children and to allow them all to encounter Christianity. All stakeholders share this vision. The result is a community where everyone is valued, known by name, and where pupils make very good progress. The school is highly inclusive. Pupils are enabled to understand and respect people who are different from themselves. A Year 1 child commented, "If someone is a Muslim, we welcome them because that is what Jesus would have done". Pupils enjoy Religious Education (RE), which is both taught and led very well. RE challenges pupils to think deeply. The

school's Christian values of respect, forgiveness, compassion, trust, perseverance and friendship are well known. They form the basis of many interactive displays around the school. Pupils often respond to these displays by answering the questions posed, and writing down their thoughts. This leads to pupils reflecting on their lives, and enables them to apply the school's values to every day issues and behaviour. The development of pupils spiritually, socially, morally and culturally is, therefore, very strong. Pupils and their parents recognise that, as a result of the Christian ethos, they are very happy and secure at school. The school's Christian values underpin learning. Pupils can articulate, for example, how the value of perseverance has led to improved progress in maths. The Christian character of the school is deeply embedded and forms the basis for all decisions and relationships in the school. This results in a happy and cohesive Christian community.

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

The whole school participates enthusiastically in collective worship. Parents find school services in the church to be 'joyous' and 'special'. Pupils often plan and lead collective worship, and do so confidently. Pupils listen carefully to Bible stories and they have an impressive knowledge of the key stories and beliefs of Christianity. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils can explain clearly their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils value the many opportunities they have to pray. Reflection takes place throughout worship, as it does throughout the entire school day. This results in pupils who are very thoughtful. Children who are new to the school quickly learn how to respond and behave in collective worship, as it is such an established experience in the school. The issue from the last inspection report, to create a focus for worship, has been successfully addressed. There is a cross, a candle and a liturgically coloured banner at the front of the hall, all of which help pupils to collect their thoughts. Pupils offer their suggestions for improvements to worship. An example is that pupils wanted to choose where to sit. This now happens and has led to a more informal and 'family feel' to collective worship. Adults appreciate collective worship, and a frequent comment from staff is that the experience has made them a more reflective person. Christian festivals are celebrated, and parents are impressed by the level of understanding that their children gain from these. In line with the headteacher's vision, collective worship helps pupils to consider the significance of Christian beliefs for themselves. This is aided by a range of leaders of collective worship, including the incumbent and the Baptist minister.

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

The headteacher lives out her Christian vision for the school and, as a result, she has established a community grounded in Christian values. Both parents and staff recognise that she leads by example and has embedded deeply the school's core values. This vision is shared effectively with all stakeholders. It has led to a real sense of a Christian community, where everything is driven by Christian values. As a result, honest self-evaluation forms the basis of school improvement, and standards are high. Each individual is regarded as special to God, and so the achievement and wellbeing of all matters. Consequently, gaps have closed and all groups of pupils achieve well. The school prepares future leaders for church schools exceptionally well. The previous deputy headteacher was appointed as headteacher of another church school. The interview process for new staff takes account of the need to understand how working in a church school is different. In this way, the headteacher has built a strong and supportive team. Governors regularly discuss Church school issues. Teachers are encouraged to access relevant training, often with the diocese. Not all of the school's policies show the Christian principles which underpin them. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. The RE in the school is very well led and highly effective. Partnerships with the local parish church and with the Baptist church are strong. Messy church has been run from the school and the church enjoys welcoming large numbers of parents to school services. The partnership is therefore mutually beneficial.

