



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### St Mary's Church of England VC Primary School

Lansdown View,  
Timsbury, Bath, BA2 0JR

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Current SIAMS grade : Good**

**Diocese: Bath and Wells**

Local authority: Bath & North East Somerset

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Date of last inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010

School's unique reference number: 123804

Headteacher: Alice Brown

Inspector's name and number: Wendy Simmons -127 Review by Derek Holloway 93

### School context

177 pupils from the village of Timsbury and surrounding area attend St Mary's. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed shortly before the Ofsted inspection in June 2013 which deemed the school 'Requires Improvement' (RI). HMI visits, the latest in November 2014, show that the measures put in place are beginning to have an impact but at the time of inspection the school remains in RI. Children are mainly white British and enter the school with average levels of attainment. The number of children eligible for Pupil Premium or with SEN is below the national average.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's as a Church of England school are good.

- The effective way in which the review of collective worship has been used to identify and enhance the school's Christian values and the resulting impact on relationships and attitudes across the school community.
- The contribution that Religious Education (RE) makes to the school's Christian character.
- The committed and tireless work of the vicar, church and local community in supporting the school.

### Areas to improve

- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality across the whole school community so that there is a more cohesive approach to the way that children are challenged to reflect and explore their spirituality across all curriculum areas.

- Develop a more rigorous system of church school self evaluation so leaders and managers can robustly monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's Christian ethos on the children's learning as well as their personal development
- Increase opportunities for pupils to be involved in the overall planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship

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

The school has imaginatively used its recent review of collective worship to identify twelve Christian values which are being woven into the school's ethos. They are explored on a two year rolling programme through worship and through identified opportunities in curriculum planning. In this way the school is working to root its vision of a learning community that seeks to 'inspire, challenge, energise' in an agreed understanding of Christian values. This approach helps inform pupils' attitudes, relationships and behaviour but has yet to significantly impact on pupils' learning. Most pupils broadly make expected progress, but this is not the case with identified groups such as those with Special Educational Needs and those in receipt of Pupil Premium. Pupils' skills of reflection are developed through a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. This is particularly evident in the 'Leading Teams' initiative, where pupils take responsibility and develop leadership skills; for example the chickens, greenhouse, pets and radio teams. There is however, no wider definition of spirituality shared across the community and as a result opportunities to apply these developing skills to progressive and deeper learning in the school's taught curriculum are underdeveloped. RE and collective worship ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding of Bible stories is well developed and as a result they can relate Christian faith and belief to their own lives. A good example of this is the 'Star Trail' experience in St Mary's church based upon the journey of the Magi, which was developed in conjunction with the local church community. The RE curriculum provides visits to places of worship including local churches and Wells Cathedral. Through RE and visitors to the school children learn about other faiths as well as in depth study of Christianity. RE lessons observed demonstrated a high level of knowledge, understanding and the ability to reflect. RE therefore makes a good contribution to the school's Christian distinctiveness. The school's Christian ethos is also evident in its charitable work which includes support for Alexander's Wheels, Red Nose Day, Bath Cats & Dogs home and a cake stall to fund the chickens.

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

Collective worship is seen as central to the life of the school and is used as the main vehicle to explore the school's distinctiveness as a church school. A thorough review of the school's approach to collective worship involved all key stakeholders and resulted in a clearly articulated approach to worship. One of twelve values is explored each term through worship, and throughout the school's life and through opportunities for reflection. This deepens understanding, and in this way impact is discernible across the life of the school. The co-ordinator's detailed planning effectively breaks this into weekly themes based upon the school's now firmly embedded Christian values interwoven with the Christian calendar, Bible and moral stories. She liaises with the vicar and provides all worship leaders with access to a variety of suggestions and resources that ensure worship reflects Anglican traditions. The vicar is a regular and effective worship leader. His skills and experience with young people make a significant impact upon the pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity. For example an act of worship on the value of hope was linked to the story of Noah and his family after the flood. Using coloured ribbons, pupils helped to create a rainbow as a symbol of God's promise of hope for the future. Consequently pupils are very positive toward worship and confidently and accurately recall worship times that were significant for them. They are confident leaders and planners of worship in school and church. Their class worship presentations to the whole school make a lasting impression and they can recall examples with great clarity. For example, worship based upon three trees and their destination as the mast of a ship, a manger and the cross for the crucifixion. Pupils have expressed a wish for more opportunities to be involved in

planning and leading worship. RE and worship have ensured all are aware of the Christian concept of the Trinity through the vicar's blessing and use of a Trinity candle. Prayer is important in the life of the school and pupils are familiar with the Lord's prayer as well as producing their own written prayers. The school has a system in place for monitoring and evaluating worship, involving staff and governor feedback and pupil conferencing with a foundation governor.

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

The headteacher has used the review of collective worship to define and drive the Christian vision of the school. In doing this she has received strong support from the governors and the church. This has provided an initial practical and achievable platform for church school development at a point in the school's history when the focus has had to be elsewhere. Governors are well informed and have been effective in supporting the school's drive to improve standards. Their monitoring is supporting RE, but has yet to address issues of spirituality and the contribution of the Christian ethos to pupils' learning, consistently. The relationship between the school and the parish is strong giving clear benefits to the pupils' learning as exemplified by work done to explore Christian festivals in more depth. Relationships within the school, the governors and all but a minority of parents are excellent and reflect the school's acknowledged values. The leaders of worship and RE are given good support. The RE subject leader's action plan embraces cross-curricular dimensions and includes the teaching of other faiths. The school has received support from the Diocese, in particular in the development of collective worship. Areas for development in the previous report have been addressed and all statutory obligations are met.

SIAMS report March 2015 St Mary's, Timsbury, Bath, BA2 0JR