



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Alverstoke Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

The Avenue, Alverstoke, Gosport

Hampshire PO12 2JS

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Portsmouth

Local authority: Hampshire

Dates of inspection: 23 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 4 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 116392

Headteacher: Graham Cutter

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Alverstoke is larger than the average size junior school with 306 children on roll. It is set in a village setting within a large town. The large majority of children are from a white British heritage. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the number entitled to receive the pupil premium. Attendance is above the national average. The headteacher and other senior staff, all promoted from within the school, have been in their current posts for almost a year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Alverstoke as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Children express their views on matters of faith and belief with considerable passion and commitment.
- Acts of worship make a significant contribution to the children's growing spiritual awareness.
- Leadership and management are fully committed to the continual development of the school as a church school.

Areas to improve

Empower children to take direction in their learning and personal development by:

- Developing their understanding of spirituality so that a deeper ability to reflect leads to responses that transform their understanding of questions of meaning and purpose.
- Develop the skills and knowledge of adults and children to facilitate enquiry and conceptual thinking that enhances the learning experience.
- Develop more creative ways that ensure planning of religious education (RE) meets the needs of all children in thinking more deeply and exploring concepts in greater depth.

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

Children have an excellent understanding that grace, love and hope together make them better people because they help them to treat themselves and others with kindness and generosity. The distinctive Christian character is outstanding because living out these three values makes a considerable impact on the quality of relationships throughout the school community and how people behave towards each other. There is a clear understanding that grace, love and hope are values rooted in Christian teaching but also have close links to the four aspects of 'foundations of learning'. Together, the values and 'foundations of learning' contribute to the children's academic success which results in standards that are at least in line with national expectations. Furthermore, children clearly explain how the core values are reflected in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development through the curricula opportunities as well as other aspects of school life such as charitable giving. Children have a good understanding of how to interpret the meaning of the core values so that they have a relevance to their own lives. They explain that grace means showing kindness towards others regardless of who they are and that hope is linked to forgiveness and aspiration. They understand that it is when these values work together that they have greatest impact. The school has made very good progress in developing its understanding of spirituality. There is a clear definition shared by adults in school and understood by children. Opportunities to develop a spiritual awareness are explicitly planned in acts of worship and in the wider curriculum. The excellent use of strategies from 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) is making a very considerable impact on the children's ability to think in depth and encourages them to take risks in their learning knowing that they will be supported by their peers and adults. The potential for children to take greater ownership in the direction in which they explore their personal spirituality has not yet been fully achieved.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is outstanding because it makes a significant impact on the children's understanding of how faith and belief can make a difference to a person's life. They have a mature appreciation that faith in God can be a celebration of life and at other times provide comfort and support when in trouble. Children know that faith is 'belief in who you are' and that it brings hope both for yourself but also for others. Moreover, children readily articulate how acts of worship have changed their views and opinions because they give them opportunities to reflect on questions of meaning and purpose on matters which are important to them. Worship themes have been carefully planned so that they explore core values which link explicitly to Bible stories as well as learning about Christian festivals and times in the church calendar. Class based acts of worship make an important contribution to the weekly pattern of worship because they give children the opportunity to explore themes in depth and prepare them for the following worship which is led by the curate. Collective worship is distinctively Anglican in nature with candles lit to represent the Trinity and other signs and symbols that reflect Christian worship. Children have a good understanding of the significance of these symbols as an aspect of worship that reflects their church distinctiveness. Children have a very mature appreciation of the place and purpose of prayer both within the life of the school and how it can support them personally. They articulate their thoughts about prayer with confidence saying how God 'talks to them in their mind when you need Him' and how 'He can give you strength' to face difficult times. Other children think that 'everyone can have a voice in their head that helps them but it doesn't have to be God; it could be a special friend'. The opportunities through worship to explore the nature of God and Jesus are giving children the chance to explore in depth the mystery of the Trinity. They enjoy the challenge of trying to make sense of what it means to them. Children have meaningful opportunities to be involved in leading and planning acts of worship and have contributed to feedback that has led to improvements.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

Standards in RE are at least in line with national expectations by the time for the majority of children leave the school at the end of Year 6. Children make good progress and achieve well in acquiring knowledge and in applying it to enhance their understanding of religious concepts. They have very positive attitudes towards the subject and engage with enthusiasm in their learning with particular delight in responding to challenging questions. Teaching is at least good and delivered by staff with confidence and a secure knowledge of the subject and this has contributed to the improved profile of RE as a valuable part of the overall curriculum. Lessons are thoroughly planned taking into account the requirements of the syllabus so that children focus on the study of Christianity but also learn about other world faiths such as Judaism and Islam. The best teaching provides children with high quality opportunities to explore concepts in depth that adapts lesson plans to meet the needs of children as they ask questions that they seek answers to. When combined with skills and knowledge, these opportunities produce insightful responses from the children. In particular, children are able to use their knowledge and make links between their learning which enhance their understanding. Sometimes the potential for these opportunities to transform the children's understanding are not yet being fully explored. Assessment is at a relatively early stage of development as the school is in the process of responding to changes in the way children's progress is assessed. A new assessment model is in place that has the potential to track children's progress and identify trends across the school. Some moderation of children's work has taken place but all of this is at too early a stage for secure judgements to be made about standards of achievement. The RE leader has a very good understanding of what needs to be done to continue to develop the subject and ensures that a detailed action plan drives improvements. She has undertaken some monitoring of children's work and observations of lessons that have given her an accurate grasp of the subject.

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

The headteacher has ensured that since September 2015 the school has made excellent progress in developing a more relevant ethos based on explicit Christian values. He is fully supported by other senior staff, particularly by the RE and P4C leaders, who together have been instrumental in introducing a clear spiritual framework supported by philosophical enquiry which has made a significant difference to the whole school community. The headteacher has a passion and commitment for the continual development of the school as a church school by empowering children to develop the skills and abilities to fulfil their potential both academically and personally. School leaders, including governors, articulate a strong Christian vision that centres on the development of the wellbeing of each child and underpinned by Christian values that have relevance and purpose in their lives. Thorough monitoring processes accurately evaluate the impact of the Christian ethos on the lives of children and identify challenging areas for improvement. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school through feedback from regular meetings with children. The curate is an important part of the school community through his role on the governing body and valuable contributions to collective worship. He is well known to children and adults in school and supports them pastorally as well as through RE lessons. The school is also well supported by other clergy and members of local church communities. Parents say that the school gives their children the space and freedom to explore their views on matters of faith and belief openly and with confidence. They agree that the school's values help their children to develop good relationships with others and are 'empowered to think for themselves' and learn from their mistakes. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.