



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Hythe Bay Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cinque Ports Avenue
Hythe. CT21 6HS

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 5 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 13 January 2011

School's unique reference number: 131020

Headteacher: Carolyn Chivers

Inspector's name and number: Canon Linda Burton NS462

School context

Hythe Bay is a larger than average size, voluntary controlled, primary school, situated in the small coastal town of Hythe. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average, at 33% and the school contains an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards have improved over the past three years, and key stage 2 SATS results in 2015 were above national and local authority averages in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

- The headteacher has a coherent vision for the school as a church school and is supported by a strong team of staff and well-informed governors.
- The school's Christian values drive forward aspirations for pupils' achievement and their personal development.
- Excellent standards of behaviour and relationships within the school are clearly based on Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the school's Christian character has a high profile by making more direct and explicit the links between the school's Christian values and the biblical teachings on which they are based, in all aspects of school life.
- Report on progress and attainment in Religious Education in a similar way to other core subjects.
- Involve governors in rigorous monitoring and evaluation of Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and RE in order to ensure their continuing improvement.

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

Hythe Bay school has a loving, family ethos. The school community has chosen its four Christian values (love, compassion, tolerance and forgiveness) and has worked hard to articulate and clarify the meaning of the school's distinctive Christian character (a development point in the last SIAS inspection). There is now a shared understanding that each child is precious, and that they should be nurtured as a child of God and valued for who they are. Through the alignment of its Christian values with all aspects of personal development and well-being, it is able to provide support for even its most vulnerable and challenged pupils and their families. The impact of the school's additional attachment figures programme is evidence of this. The well-established restorative approaches to behaviour management issues accord with the school's Christian values and ethos. Children share the common understanding of the school's values and this is demonstrated in their good behaviour, motivation, respect and concern for others. Attainment has shown an improving trend over the last three years. In 2015, pupils' end of Key Stage 2 levels in reading, writing and maths were above levels reported nationally and by the local authority. Improvements are being made in closing the gap between the progress of disadvantaged children and that of other children. Attendance is in line with national expectations. Parents confirm high levels of satisfaction with the school's supportive and caring environment and with the impact of its values on their children's behaviour and learning. Children are able to relate the values of the school in a practical way to their lives, but, because the values are not explicitly linked with biblical teachings, these links are often limited and tenuous. The school strongly promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children through its broad and varied curriculum. Helping those less fortunate than themselves is well-established in the school and this is seen in acts of loving kindness towards others by even the most disadvantaged in the school community. In addition, there is considerable fundraising for local, national and international charities and a high level of involvement in the life of the local community. Children's levels of knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths are good. The subject leader for RE is experienced and enthusiastic and works hard to ensure that teaching in this curriculum area is imaginative and creative. Learning in both attainment targets is planned for and work is enjoyable and challenging. This was evidenced in the interactive lesson observed with Year 2 children on Christian baptism and in the Year 6 lesson on the Guru Granth Sahib when, during group work, children made insightful responses to the question posed by the teacher, 'Could you have tolerance without compassion?' Work has been done on assessment procedures since the last inspection. The development of a robust system of observation, work scrutiny, formative and summative assessment in order to improve children's progress in line with other core subjects is underway. Assessment practices in RE are increasingly aligned with other core subjects in the school and with attainment in literacy but are not yet reported on in the manner of other core subjects. Through holding focused RE days this curriculum area contributes to the Christian character of the school. This practice is under-developed and as a result impact is limited.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The daily act of collective worship brings together the whole school as a Christian community and promotes the sense of belonging. Children know that worship is a special time and they enjoy it. Worship is planned in accordance with the diocesan collective worship framework. It regularly includes biblical material and links are made with the school's Christian values. Whilst collective worship enables children to develop some age appropriate understanding of Jesus Christ, of the seasons of the church's year and of the Trinity, their understanding is not yet secure. As part of the weekly organisational pattern, worship is led by members of St Leonard's church, including the recently appointed priest. Members of other local Christian denominations also lead worship termly, which ensures that a rich variety of styles of worship occurs. The school celebrates significant Christian festivals in St Leonard's church. Support for these by parents has grown considerably in recent times. Whole school collective worship makes a good contribution to children's understanding of the Anglican tradition and they are familiar with its significant elements. In the worship observed all of the children were thoroughly engaged in singing and listening. They reflected quietly on what having hope meant to them individually, a prayer was offered by a member of the worship group and all the children joined in the Lord's Prayer. Although children participate enthusiastically in collective worship, their opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate worship (a development point in the last SIAS inspection) are not yet fully developed. The recently begun worship group of children from years 5 and 6, led by the RE subject leader, now takes responsibility for aspects of the organisation of whole school worship and is becomingly increasingly involved in contributing relevant and appropriate prayers and selecting songs. Reflection areas in classrooms and the provision of Christian symbols around the school (a development point in the last SIAS inspection) encourage personal prayer and reflection. There are systems for the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship in the school. These do not currently involve all members of the school and so are not sufficiently robust to bring about significant improvement.

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

The life of the school is guided by its Christian ethos. The headteacher's positive leadership and strong vision for taking the school forward encourages its leaders to be open-minded and its staff to work together as a strong team. The school's Christian values are shown in its school prospectus and incorporated into the school improvement plan. The impact of this distinctive vision is seen in the improvement in standards of attainment, in the quality of pupils' behaviour in school, in its approach to attendance issues and also in the level of support made available by the school to all children and their families. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The school's leadership team, including its governors, is able to analyse the impact of its actions and thus move forward in its strategic planning. Governors play a constructive role in supporting and challenging the headteacher. They contribute to school self-evaluation processes but do not yet rigorously monitor and evaluate Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and RE. The new parish priest plays an active role on the governing body and is committed to continued school improvement. Links between the school and the parish church are already good and there is evidence of a wholehearted commitment to their further development.

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