



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Blasius Church of England Primary Academy

Albert Road
Shanklin
PO37 7LY

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese:

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 30 September 2015

Date of last inspection: 13 May 2009

School's unique reference number: 139644

Headteacher: Mark Stephens

Inspector's name and number: Richard Blackmore

School context

St Blasius is a slightly smaller than average primary school with 186 pupils on roll. The majority of children come from the local community, although some travel from further afield. The percentage of children with special education needs is below the national average. The percentage of children entitled to free school meals is above average. Since the last inspection, there have been significant staffing changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher and there have been considerable changes to the building and school environment. The school became an academy on the 1st September 2013.

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

- The headteacher and governors provide strong Christian leadership expressed through distinctive core values, resulting in an all pervasive Christian ethos which makes a positive difference to pupils' academic achievement, spiritual development and well-being
- A commitment to Christian care for individuals and their families results in good behaviour, positive relationships with parents and the parish which have a beneficial impact in the wider community.
- Well planned worship, led by a variety of people, is an important part of the school's daily life valued for its contribution to developing Christian distinctiveness.

Areas to improve

- Improve the assessment of Religious Education (RE) so that teachers can use results to inform their planning of learning experiences that ensure achievement is at least good.
- Ensure the consistent monitoring of the impact of collective worship and use the information gathered to support planning which enables the spiritual life of the school community to be continually enriched.

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

The school's clear values and mission statement were produced in consultation with the school community, including the pupils. The school works effectively to firmly link these with Christian teachings and these shape the thinking of the school and are understood, articulated and embraced by all members of the school community. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that the school's values have more explicit Christian links through the curriculum. The school's distinctive Christian ethos enables and encourages the strong partnership that exists between pupils, staff, parents, the church and the wider community. This impacts positively on pupils' academic achievement, attitudes and personal development, as well as the Christian care that exists within and between all members of the school family. This helps pupils to experience a calm, happy and purposeful learning environment where they are motivated to learn. These factors which make up the school's strong Christian character enable pupils to reach levels of attainment that are in line with national standards, progress quickly and help to ensure their attendance is in line with the national average. Good and imaginative teaching in RE contributes well to the pupils' spiritual development and the Christian character of the school. It is well planned and pupils say they enjoy RE and how it is important to them and the life of the school.

The children embrace responsibilities with relish and carry them out within a Christian approach using the school's values. Good examples include the school council, which makes significant contributions to school policy and raises money for charities. The class prayer leaders also develop pupils' leadership skills. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good. The impact of these activities is also seen in the children's well developed understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect and their deep understanding and knowledge of different communities and faith groups. Members of staff work well together and support each other. Children feel happy and safe. The care taken of the whole environment is of great credit to all concerned and reflects God's care for His creation and pupils' fully understand this and their responsibility within it. They are encouraged to show concern for world issues and they recognise the need to work together to help others less fortunate than themselves. Parents feel that they can approach the staff to express their views and that they will be listened to. They are appreciative of the Christian nature of the school. This extends to the way it approaches aspects of the school's work including attendance and exclusion. The school displays a very considered, caring and aspirational perspective in improving these important issues for pupils and families.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Great value is placed on collective worship by all members of the school community. It has a high profile in the life of the school and its ongoing development is a key priority in the school development plan. The children and adults are very positive about the distinctly Christian worship and say it significantly helps them in their daily lives and in understanding the Christian perspective on the school's values. They speak warmly and with enthusiasm of stories, 'songs about God', the many prayer opportunities and lively visiting leaders. Christian themes are well planned, developed and applied in all aspects of school life. Staff, clergy, members of the governing body and other visitors share in leading worship. Worship is seen as a valuable experience by everyone in the school because it makes a positive impact on pupils' and adults' spiritual development. Collective worship also ensures that pupils develop a good understanding of Jesus Christ and God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All members of the community are inspired and spiritually affirmed by worship because of its relevance, variety and sincerity. Christian values are strongly reinforced during worship and are clearly understood by the pupils. Many aspects of Anglican liturgy are used with understanding by the children. Worship is a key focal point in each school day, and festivals are regularly celebrated in Church with good support from parents and the local community. Pupils make important contributions to plans for worship and work diligently to make sure that it is exciting for other pupils. Prayer is an integral feature of the worship life of the school. Pupils know and say the Lord's Prayer and they use traditional responses. They write their own prayers,

displayed in class books. To support the pupils' understanding of worship there are regular opportunities for pupils to richly engage with the Bible. Worship on Wednesdays is specifically focused on Bible passages and this helps pupils to gain a clear understanding of the meaning behind different stories and verses.

While the school's documentation shows they consider the way it approaches collective worship there is limited information and evidence of detailed monitoring and evaluation by leaders of the full impact of collective worship on pupils.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is well led and the newly appointed subject leader displays much commitment and dedication. She has worked with a clear purpose and sense of direction in driving through initiatives to raise the profile and breadth of the RE curriculum and standards of attainment and progress achieved by pupils. As a result achievement is good. There is a clear emphasis on the impact of faith on a believer, not just facts about faith within a wide range of religions. Children spend a good proportion of their lessons in discussion, questioning and sharing their ideas. This helps to make the curriculum for RE effective because it ensures pupils have a breadth of knowledge of different religions. Pupils can also clearly articulate a good knowledge of the Bible, the life and teaching of Jesus and the Holy Trinity. They speak very positively about their enjoyment of RE and how teachers make the lessons interesting and relevant to their daily lives. Teaching and learning are of a good standard because a wide variety of strategies are used to take account of the previous understanding of different pupils and the varying preferred learning styles of the children. Despite this, the new and developing assessment system for RE does not precisely measure the amount of progress that pupils make and enable teachers to fully use this information when planning future learning.

Throughout the school, pupils experience whole class and group teaching with opportunities for research as appropriate. Pupils enjoy RE and say that it is important to them and the life of the school.

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

The headteacher and the governors confidently articulate and encourage a vision for the school which is firmly based on distinctively Christian principles. This has developed a school that has its Christian character running through all parts. School leaders work in partnership with governors to support the work of the school in its planning and delivery of the RE and collective worship. This is ensuring that there is a consistent and clearly understood method to these areas of the school's work. Ideas for developing the school's Christian ethos further are incorporated in the school development plan. This is helping to ensure that the academic needs of the children are being met and pupils consistently achieve well. Leaders have completed self evaluation but it does not align itself closely enough with the SIAMS inspection schedule. As a result the illustration of the school's Christian distinctiveness and how it is tackling identified areas it sees as priorities are not always clear. Curriculum development is encouraging an informed respect for religious and moral values. A careful and thorough evaluation of the curriculum is completed by senior leaders to ensure that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates every aspect of the curriculum and school life.

Leaders have recognised the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports the well-being of the whole school community. Links with the community are very good and the partnership with other organisations also includes the local secondary school. This helps to ensure that pupils' well-being is secured and personal and spiritual growth is effective. Partnerships with parents and the church enrich learners' experience. Links with the local church community are strong and mutually enriching, and are effective in bringing a greater understanding of Anglican life and liturgy to the pupils.

Preparation for future leadership in church schools is effective, with high quality in-service training, good delegation, coaching and teamwork. Continuing professional development of all staff and governors is a high priority within the school. This contributes to the continuing development of staff and governors in this Christian school and to pupils' SMSC understanding and skills.

