



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Arundel Church of England Primary School

Jarvis Road  
Arundel  
West Sussex  
BN18 9HT

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Outstanding

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** Chichester

Local authority: West Sussex

Dates of inspection: 7 October 2015

Date of last inspection: February 2010

School's unique reference number: 126019

Headteacher: Andrew Simpson

Inspector's name and number: Hilary Ferries 276

#### School context

Arundel is an averaged size school just outside the town centre. The majority of pupils are of white British ethnicity. A smaller than average number of pupils are entitled to the pupil premium and a smaller than average number of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. The school serves the local area, but some families also travel a long way to attend. The school received a judgement of 'good' from Ofsted in March 2015. The church, which is a mile away from the school, is currently in an interregnum following the departure of the parish priest. The headteacher has been in post since 2009.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Arundel CE Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Strong Christian leadership at all levels articulates a clear vision, embedded Christian values and ambition for all pupils
- Excellent opportunities for spiritual, moral social and cultural development
- Positive relationships with the church, community and families are based on a Christian ethos of care
- Collective worship that is central to the life of the school and links to everyday life

#### Areas to improve

- Embed the recently implemented assessment policy to ensure pupils know where they are in terms of their development in religious education (RE)
- Develop the 'dream team' as outlined in the school development plan to involve pupils fully in planning and leading of collective worship to give them more ownership

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

The very strong Christian ethos of the school has a significant impact on learners. Every child is considered 'unique and a child of God' and this is reflected in the provision for and commitment to all pupils in their academic learning. Pupils speak very positively of how the teachers always want them to do their best and make learning interesting. This is linked overtly to the Christian values which are displayed around the school and known by all. At the suggestion of the pupils, there is a 'values circle' in the hall which celebrates the different values. Rewards such as house points are explicitly linked to them. The school aims to make the Christian values real to pupils in their lives. As a result, pupils can articulate the impact of Christian values on their own lives and learning. The vision statement has just been reviewed and renewed, at the suggestion of the children and the new vision 'Love of God, love of neighbour, love of learning' has been launched. Pupils feel a strong sense of ownership and commitment to this vision and the Christian ethos of the school. This is evident in the school council, eco council and religious education councils, which all contribute well to the development of the school. The religious education council planned the Peace Circle, blessed by the Archbishop of West Africa in 2014 which is used by pupils for quiet times. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding. Spirituality is woven through every aspect of school life. The introduction of 'big questions' has developed the depth of thought and discussion across the school and led to sophisticated levels of reflection. There are links with a school in Sierra Leone which is made meaningful to all pupils by governors, who visit both schools to report on progress and the impact of contributions the children make. This contributes well to pupils' understanding of world-wide Christianity. A tuck shop run by pupils before school raises funds and individual pupils both fundraise for and make personal contributions to support the sister school, further encouraging cultural and social development. The behaviour policy is based on the Christian values and the principle 'What Would Jesus Do?' (WWJD). Several pupils and parents talked about how this contributed to the excellent behaviour in the school and this was observed during the inspection.

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

Collective worship is seen by all as a vital element of school life and each day starts with an act of worship. Pupils say that they value this. Worship is led by all teachers and regular visitors, including the parish priest and the Baptist Church minister. This gives variety that the pupils say they find engaging and meaningful. Collective worship is very well planned, using themes based on school values and the Christian calendar. This strengthens the knowledge and application of the values and makes them 'real' to the school community. The strong Bible based elements are also explained and set in context. The school hall has a range of displays and focus areas that link worship to the Christian values and emphasize the link between worship and life. This idea of a special time is enhanced by the choice pupils have over where to sit. Pupils interviewed during the inspection said how much they valued being able to sit wherever they like, as it sets worship time apart as special and reflects the trust that the headteacher has in them.

Collective worship is monitored and evaluated by pupils, staff and governors and changes that are suggested in the feedback are taken on board by the leadership. As a result, pupils are very positive about worship. They enjoy contributing: taking part in drama, reading and leading prayers. Pupils sometimes plan and lead the whole worship session, for example in class worship and services at the parish church. The action plan outlines the development of a 'dream team', with members from the Ethos Committee and the RE council to review daily evaluations and the results of the annual survey of worship, to develop the themes and the pupils' role in planning whole school worship. Pupils interviewed said they welcome this opportunity. Prayer is a strength of the school. In addition to prayers said during the day and the prayer box where pupils can post prayers that will be offered up in worship, there are prayer weeks that involve the partnership of the school and parish congregation. These opportunities have developed the spiritual development of the community and harnessed the talents of parents and

pupils.

A recent theme for worship has been the Trinity and pupils from all year groups were able to articulate an understanding of this. Year 6 have created models to depict the Trinity in their RE lessons following input from the Baptist minister. These will be used in his Sunday school to support the learning of his congregation and further strengthen links in the community.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

The school has addressed both the issues raised in the last inspection. The exciting and wide ranging RE curriculum follows the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus. It is well taught and engages pupils which results in very good progress and achievement, which is in line with other core subjects and above national expectations.

Teaching is so effective because the RE subject leader supports learning well and carries out regular monitoring through a range of means including lesson observations, work scrutiny, looking at planning and tracking progress made by pupils. She and the headteacher, who was previously the subject leader, have ensured that all teachers have had professional development on initiatives such as Godly Play and feedback marking and there have also been whole school initiatives such as the introduction of spiritual journey books. These initiatives show the value placed on RE, and have led to good subject knowledge, contributing to the Christian character of the school by embedding the values in context.

The curriculum map shows that there is an appropriate balance of Christianity and other world religions and pupils demonstrate good understanding of what they have learned.

National changes to assessment and local changes to the syllabus mean that these are in an early stage of development and not yet embedded.

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

The headteacher, governors and staff clearly articulate and live the Christian vision of the school. The headteacher has a strong personal faith and his Christian commitment and ambition for each pupil and for the school to succeed are evident in all aspects of his leadership. He is a strong Christian role model. Parents say that he is approachable and listens to them and that 'his support is phenomenal'.

Governors support and challenge the headteacher effectively. Through their monitoring they know the school well. They have used the considerable expertise within their body to shape direction and strengthen the Christian distinctiveness of the school. The ambition of the school means that the reflective self-evaluation is used to plan and deliver ongoing improvement in the Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness. The Ethos Committee reviews the school as a church school and each member leads on a priority for church school development, such as the Values Project (for which the school won the Bishop's Commendation) the development of the spiritual journals (to further the links between RE and spiritual development) and the links with the school in Sierra Leone (to understand the worldwide Anglican church). This means that the school is clear about where it is going and the progress of initiatives is monitored and evaluated. There is a very strong partnership with the parish church. The school is seen as important to the church; pupils' work is displayed in the church, members of the congregation are involved with school events and the headteacher writes for the parish magazine. There was a very positive relationship with the previous incumbent and the links are continuing through the interregnum.

There is a commitment to succession planning. Several senior leaders have left through promotion and the new RE subject leader has been well prepared for her role. There are good relationships with local schools, the headteacher is on the West Sussex Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education and has also supported another school in the locality. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.