



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Mill Lane, Normanton-on-Trent, Newark. NG23 6RW

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Southwell & Nottingham

Local authority: Nottinghamshire

Dates of inspection: 9 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 26 April 2010

School's unique reference number: 122764

Headteacher: Diane Ward

Inspector's name and number: Anne Lumb (333)

School context

St Matthew's is a smaller than average, voluntary controlled village primary school with 51 pupils on roll. All the children are taught in mixed-age classes. St Matthew's shares the leadership of the school with Norwell C of E Primary School, having an executive headteacher who took up the post in April 2014. The school serves the village of Normanton-on-Trent and a number of surrounding villages. Currently 15% of the children are in receipt of pupil premium funding. Additional funding is also provided for four children who have complex additional needs. The school is in close proximity to the church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Matthew's as a Church of England school are good

- St Matthew's is a school community based on Christian values, in particular love and respect for all as children of God, so that caring relationships are in evidence throughout the school day.
- Links with the local church have been re-established and strengthened since the arrival of the current vicar in January 2015. Consequently church and school are working together to enhance the Christian distinctiveness of worship and of the school's ethos.
- Partnerships with other schools are providing children with opportunities to develop friendships with children outside their own community thus developing a greater understanding of cultural and religious diversity within the context of the Christian belief that all are created in the image of God.

Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for children to be more directly involved in planning and leading collective worship so that they gain a greater understanding of the nature and purpose of collective worship.
- Develop appropriate teaching of the Trinity within collective worship religious education (RE) to extend and deepen understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Explore different approaches to prayer in order to deepen the children's understanding of prayer and confidence to participate in extempore prayer.

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

This is a small, caring school community with a good understanding of the Christian values that underpin every aspect of school life, ensuring all children feel safe, are happy and do well. Children learn in mixed-age classes where they are often seen helping each other with their learning and with practical tasks. They live out the friendship and trust in God that they learn about in collective worship and RE lessons. One parent spoke of her child being 'looked after' by the other children. Children of all abilities make good progress in their learning, as data and a recent Ofsted inspection report confirms. Appropriate support is provided for several children with complex needs whilst challenge and enrichment are provided for the gifted and able. The Christian character of the school contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the children; for example, through using Bible stories as a reference point for learning in the classroom as well as within collective worship. There is an increasing understanding of and respect for the diversity which exists within our society as partnerships with schools in different contexts are being strengthened and developed. Children spoke enthusiastically about recent exchange visits with Rushey Mead School, Leicester. They had found learning about the different religious faith of some of the children from Leicester interesting, with one Y6 pupil commenting that it helped him to develop respect for different faiths. RE is recognised as a core subject and is effectively taught throughout the school. The children respond positively to RE lessons, demonstrating a good knowledge of what Jesus did, the ways he helped people with different needs and the way he helps people today, enabling them to "make things better" thus impacting positively on the Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship plays an important role in the life of the school community and provides a space in which all are enabled to focus on Christian values, develop a good understanding of the Bible and consider personal spirituality. Values of mutual trust, compassion and endurance are displayed throughout the school day. The vicar is a regular and welcome visitor into school and often leads worship time, strengthening links with the parish and children's understanding of Anglican tradition. The children are actively involved in the preparation of the space used for worship and during the worship times. They evaluate collective worship and feel that their views are taken seriously with their suggested changes often being implemented. However, they do not regularly plan and lead collective worship. Collective worship is being well managed and led, with recent developments contributing to a better understanding of its nature, purpose and vibrancy. The children enjoy worship times where they learn about God and find out 'why Jesus is special for Christians and what he did.' Their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is, however, underdeveloped. The children talk about prayer and reflection as an important part of collective worship. However, there are insufficient opportunities to write and speak different types of prayer.

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

School leaders articulate a vision for the school which encompasses the provision of a good academic education and the development of spirituality and character driven by clear Christian values. A real strength of the school has been the development of partnerships with other schools; particularly Norwell, Sturton-le-Steeple and Rushey Mead. Whilst working closely with Norwell both schools have maintained their distinctive Christian ethos and identity. Evaluation and strategic planning ensure the continued impact of the Christian vision. The partnership has provided opportunities for staff development with some staff taking responsibility for leading a subject or area of responsibility across both schools, enabling them to develop as middle leaders. School governance is effective since foundation governors monitor and evaluate the school's Christian distinctiveness as well as the teaching and learning. A recent learning walk to identify Christian distinctiveness and experience collective worship by a foundation governor was undertaken jointly with a governor from Norwell. As a result of the learning walk, small reflection areas were introduced to the classrooms. However, more work is needed to engage the children. The school has strong links with the local church especially through the vicar who is developing his role within the school, both pastorally and through supporting the children's learning. A new initiative is the introduction of the 'Vicar's Award' for children who have worked hard and improved and is open to all the children. Parents and the local community actively support the school, recently working in partnership to produce a film of the school and the village. The school's Christian distinctiveness has been strengthened by regular support from the

diocesan adviser and staff attending training provided by the diocese. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. All the development points from the previous inspection have been addressed and the school has laid the foundations for becoming an outstanding church school.

SIAMS report July 2015 St Matthew's C of E Primary School, Normanton-on-Trent, NG23 6RW