



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### St Michael's VC Church of England Primary School

Ashford Road, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6PU

**Previous SIAS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Canterbury**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 21 October 2015

Date of last inspection: 22 November 2010

School's unique reference number: 118670

Headteacher: Sara Williamson

Inspector's name and number: Anne Southgate 820

#### School context

St Michael's is a smaller than average sized primary school. There is increasing pupil mobility. The majority of pupils are from a white British background, but there is a growing number of pupils with English as an additional language. The majority of pupils live in the rural village where the school is set. However, very few pupils have an existing connection with the church when they start at the school. The headteacher was appointed in March 2015, having been acting headteacher since September 2014.

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

- The new leadership team have embedded Christian values as a means to drive up achievement and to secure good behaviour.
- The school is a genuinely cohesive and inclusive community, where all matter equally.
- The strong relationship with the local church has a very positive impact on the school's progress.

#### Areas to improve

- Leaders should develop effective and consistent assessment systems in Religious Education (RE) to raise attainment across the school.
- Reach out to all parents to help them to understand and embrace the Christian character of the school.

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

A clear set of Christian values, based on the fruits of the Spirit, drives school improvement. Pupils remember these values by associating each one with a fruit, for example, 'the loganberry

of love'. Therefore they are well known by everyone who works in the school. The values are used by pupils, staff and governors to reflect on their daily lives. For example, a pupil used the ideas of God's love and peace to help them to grieve for a family pet. Some parents are highly supportive of the school's Christian foundation, but not all parents understand how the Christian values underpin improvement. There is a genuine sense of the school being a mutually supportive community, where everyone works together to achieve the best for the pupils. Achievement has risen as a result. Pupils generally behave well and they relate this to the Christian values. For example, pupils often remind each other to show self-control and kindness. Pupils accept those who are different from themselves, and there is good care for those who are more vulnerable. This means that the school is a very inclusive community. Exclusion is viewed as a very last resort, and so adults work hard to help pupils put right their mistakes. Displays around the school are a constant, visual reminder of the school's values and these are referred to frequently by both pupils and staff. Pupils are helped to identify which value they need to show to put right disagreements and to solve problems. Pupils reflect on events throughout the day, and sometimes write prayers. These are used as class prayers. In most classes RE makes a strong contribution to the Christian character of the school. As a result, the Christian character contributes well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

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

The whole school community highly values collective worship. All stakeholders are involved, and parents particularly enjoy the opportunity to worship alongside their children. Pupils engage enthusiastically in worship. They have a very good knowledge of the life of Jesus and of Christian beliefs, such as God being Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For example, a Year 2 child explained in detail how God is three in one, using the analogy of the parts of an egg. Worship enables pupils and adults to think deeply and to reflect on the worship theme and on their lives. Worship is the glue that binds this inclusive school community together. Governors are active and effective in supporting school collective worship. Pupils talk about Christian values and beliefs at home, and many encourage their parents to pray with them. A range of leaders from a variety of traditions leads worship throughout the year. Very good use is made of the church and of the school grounds to provide a rich experience of worship. The school community celebrates key Christian festivals, and pupils understand the significance of the colours of the Church's year. Anglican responses, such as, "go in peace to love and serve the Lord", are used. As a result, pupils are very familiar with Anglican traditions. Therefore the school has fully addressed this issue from the last inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of worship have developed considerably, which also addresses an issue from the last inspection. They now lead to improvements, such as increased pupil leadership of worship.

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

There is a shared belief between senior leaders and governors, that developing the Christian character of the school is the key to securing school improvement. The new leadership team have embedded Christian values as the means to drive up standards, and to establish a genuinely caring community. They have developed effective systems to monitor and accelerate the school's progress as a Church school. For example, they now use the school's Christian values to support behaviour management. As a result, achievement has increased, and pupils feel safe and secure at school. The relationship with the local church is a strength of the school. The vicar is very involved in the life of the school. He works with new staff to help them to understand what it means to work in a Church school. The church and school together group (CAST) make clear plans to develop the school's effectiveness further. There is a seamless relationship between the church and the school, with both parties benefitting. The headteacher has strengthened the Christian character of the school, and models Christian leadership for the rest of the staff. She gives priority to Church school development and ensures that staff and governors receive appropriate training and support. Very good progress

has been made in developing collective worship since the last inspection. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. RE is now led well, and the strong leadership has secured improvements. However, standards are not consistently high across the school and the issue from the last inspection to develop effective monitoring and assessment arrangements in RE has not been fully addressed.

SIAMS report October 2015 St Michael's, Tenterden TN30 6PU