



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Pilgrim's Cross Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Picket Twenty Way

Andover

Hampshire SPII 6TY

Previous SIAS grade: Not applicable

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Winchester

Local authority: Hampshire

Dates of inspection: 1 March 2016

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

School's unique reference number: 136407

Headteacher: Jon Le Fevre

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Pilgrim's Cross is smaller than the average size primary school with 164 children on roll. It opened in September 2013 and currently has children up to Year 4. It is situated in a new housing development. The school is growing with new building planned to accommodate the rising intake. The large majority of children are from a white British heritage with varied socio-economic backgrounds. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average as is the number entitled to receive the pupil premium. Attendance is in line with the national average. The headteacher has been in post since January 2016 following support as an interim headteacher from the summer of 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Pilgrim's Cross as a Church of England school are good

- Children express their views on matters of faith and belief with a confidence and openness that reflects the school's inclusive ethos.
- Opportunities for children to develop their personal spiritual awareness are becoming increasingly important for their wellbeing and success in their learning.
- The commitment of leaders and managers to the Christian ethos means that it is continually developing to have meaning and purpose for all members of the school community.

Areas to improve

Provide greater opportunities for pupils to be empowered in the exploration of their personal spirituality by:

- Developing the use of open ended questions to explore spirituality across the whole

school curriculum so that there are clearly defined opportunities that enhance learning.

- Providing time and space for children to explore their own thoughts and ideas and ensuring that they have creative ways to record and capture them.
- Ensuring that planning of outcomes in religious education (RE) provides children with more innovative opportunities to explore their learning in greater depth.

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

The progress that the school has made in establishing a distinctive ethos, based on Christian values, has been impressive and continues to be so. In less than three years, the school's leaders have ensured that explicit Christian values support the development of the children's spiritual awareness so that they acquire a sense of themselves, others around them and explore life's big questions. Three core values are currently being revisited so that all members of the school community have a deeper understanding of why they can make a difference to their lives and the lives of others. Children have a very good appreciation that the three values of love, courage and trust are linked to Bible stories which help them learn about Jesus and what He taught us. They also appreciate that these values are important and explain how they can guide us in our everyday actions. They are less certain about why these values make a difference. For example, children explain how love is important and that Jesus showed us love. They say that 'love grows when we smile' and that it is 'infectious'. They find it hard to explain what difference this makes. The development of a shared understanding of spirituality has been a significant initiative that is making an increasingly powerful impact on the quality of the children's learning and their understanding of relationships. Children are very articulate and explain how opportunities to explore a personal spirituality through reflection of their experiences can change their perceptions and actions. This has not yet been fully explored across the whole curriculum by equipping children with the skills to ask deep questions and in giving them time to explore them. Relationships among adults and children in school are excellent and based on care and kindness towards each other. Children say that they are happy in school and feel that adults look after them and help them to do well in their learning. Children are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas with confidence knowing that they will be listened to with respect. In particular, they have a mature confidence to talk about faith and belief openly and to challenge one another's views but also learn from them.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The development of key questions in collective worship has significantly improved their impact by giving worship themes greater focus. This in turn has given children the opportunity to develop their understanding of the core values so that they have more relevance to them. The impact of this is seen both in school and, according to parents, in the home as well, where children use the language of love, courage and trust at a deeper level due to their exploration in worship. Acts of worship are distinctively Christian with an emphasis on Bible teaching and prayer that underpins the good opportunities for reflection and which give worship messages a strong moral and social context. Children have a clear understanding that collective worship is time to pray to God and learn about their values because 'it is what God would want us to do'. Children have a good appreciation that the values can be linked to the nature of the Trinity and are beginning to develop the confidence to explore this in their own way by questioning their own opinions and the views of others. They have a mature appreciation that prayer isn't asking for a 'wish list' and that they may not always be answered. They can explain how prayer can bring comfort and 'give a feeling on your heart' that 'makes you feel good about something'. They respond to prayer with a reverence and respect explaining that it is a 'essential' not to 'interrupt' or 'disturb' others when they are praying 'whether they are a Christian or not'. Children have good opportunities to be involved in acts of worship including feedback about their views. They have very positive attitudes toward worship saying that it is an important part of what makes Pilgrim's Cross a 'special place'.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

Children make good progress in RE so that by Year 4 they have attained standards at least in line with national expectations. They do well in their learning because teaching is confident and carefully planned to meet the needs of the syllabus and the scheme of work used to implement it. This serves children well as they acquire a secure knowledge of Christianity and other world faiths and they are able to apply this knowledge to learn from their studies. Teachers use good quality questions to draw out children's responses and this means that they make good progress in the lesson against learning outcomes based on the expectations of the RE scheme. The best learning happens when children have the opportunity to explore their own interests and curiosity in what they are learning. This often happens spontaneously and, where teachers encourage children to follow their own thoughts, there was a marked increase in the depth of learning and the quality of the questioning and responses from children. The full potential to use these moments to take children's thinking outside of the context in which the concept they are learning is set, and thereby enhancing their learning, has not been fully realised. However, when this does happen, children respond with great enthusiasm and a thirst to enquire in greater depth. Children have positive attitudes towards RE because, as they say, they enjoy the challenge and that there 'isn't a right answer'. Religious education makes a very good contribution to the children's understanding of the core values; which are not used in a contrived way but occur out of their learning. Likewise, links to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are referred to naturally as an integral aspect of RE. Assessment of children's work is developing. There are adequate systems in place to assess the children's progress towards meeting the requirements of the syllabus. Yet, in so doing, the emphasis on tracking the successes of individual children is not clear. The school is aware of this and is keen to develop an assessment system in RE that places more emphasis on identifying the successes of children especially when it concerns their deeper thinking. The two RE leaders work very well together and jointly have an excellent understanding of the contribution that RE makes to the children's spiritual and moral development. They are enthusiastic and keen for the subject to grow in strength.

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

The school's leaders and managers have made substantial progress since the school opened in September 2013 to embed a strong Christian ethos. The arrival of the present headteacher is continuing that process which is taking the school's distinctive character to a deeper understanding. The passion and commitment of the headteacher is shared with other senior leaders, such as the deputy headteacher, who work together to reflect on their practice and strive to improve. They do this very successfully. The quality of evaluation and their approach to gathering high quality evidence to support their views is excellent. Self-evaluation is thorough and critical which contributes to the good quality action plans and challenging targets which they set themselves. Governors too are knowledgeable about the school's strengths as a church school and share the commitment to give the Christian ethos purpose for all members of the school community. The contribution of local clergy is a strength of the school and there are growing links with local churches particularly in bringing church to the local community. Children talk of the parish church as 'our school church' and clergy as an integral part of school life. Parents feel strongly that the school helps their children to develop a language through which they can express their views and opinions on matters of faith and belief. They say that their children are inquisitive about faith and are comfortable to ask questions at home. Parents agree that this approach is one that is inclusive regardless of whether you have a faith or not; children are allowed to question their own and the beliefs of others. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.