



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Lymington Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School

Avenue Road,  
Lymington, Hampshire  
SO41 9GP

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Winchester**

Local authority: Hampshire

Dates of inspection: 27 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 6 / 7 April 2011

School's unique reference number: 116365

Headteacher: Jacqui Stoneham

Inspector's name and number: David Shears (423)

#### School context

Lymington Infant is smaller than the average school with 180 pupils on roll. There are two classes in each year group, including the Early Years. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher until July 2016. The leader for religious education (RE) has been in her role for less than a year.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lymington Infant as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The care of pupils is a strength of the school which results in highly positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- The school's distinctively Christian values have a highly positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Collective worship is central to the school's Christian character and has a memorable impact on all those who attend.
- Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the school's distinctively Christian nature and this is promoted well to parents and the local community.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the purpose of prayer and have many opportunities to pray and reflect together.

#### Areas to improve

- Further develop the quality of teaching in RE by ensuring that pupils are always challenged well to enable them to respond with a deeper knowledge and understanding.
- Ensure that the monitoring of the school is consistently analytical to better inform the school development plan.
- Develop pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith.

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

Pupils are well aware of the school's distinctively Christian values and are able to talk about how they relate to particular Bible stories. Staff model the values well and this encourages pupils to do the same. Consequently, what they learn from these values is having an outstanding impact on their attitudes and behaviour, both of which are excellent. Acts of service and kindness are celebrated with the whole school community. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and pupils care well for each other. This care often goes beyond the school and reaches out to those who are less fortunate than themselves, such as raising money for the charity supporting Ebola victims and for Unicef in support of Syrian refugees. The care of others also impacts on people in the local community such as regular visits to the local hospice to befriend patients receiving palliative care. This also in turn helps pupils to understand more fully the needs of others. All this work, enhanced by the good use of 'Philosophy for Children', means that pupils have many effective opportunities to develop their moral and social skills. The spiritual development of pupils is a particular strength. In a range of lessons across the curriculum pupils are often invited to reflect on what they are learning and how this can relate to the school's Christian values and their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Persona characters of 'Spiritual Saskia', 'Social Sam', 'Moral Max' and 'Cultural Clara' help pupils to identify the attributes of each and how they can develop them further. A structure for the teaching of spirituality has been introduced within collective worship and the school recognises that this could be extended throughout all aspects of school life. The cultural development of pupils is supported well through RE, particularly when pupils are exploring Judaism and comparing it with Christianity. However, the school has already identified the need to improve pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. The school's values also have an impact on pupils' attitudes towards their academic work and this means that pupils are achieving well. Leaders had noted that the attendance of pupils needed improving. The school has worked hard with parents and pupils to raise attendance and this has resulted in a significant improvement this year.

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

Pupils enjoy collective worship and say that it is an important part of the school day. Acts of worship are carefully planned with a particular Christian value being explored. Bible stories are often used to illustrate the value and pupils are able to reflect on how they could emulate the value in their own lives, both in the school and at other times. Parents comment that their children often apply these values at home. For example, pupils have been helping their parents around the home as an act of service, sometimes without being asked to do so. Pupils enjoy singing and this is beautifully led by staff who enable it to become a genuine act of worship. Leaders agree that the range of songs could be further widened to include some modern worship songs. Prayer is considered to be a very important part of worship and pupils know that they can pray anywhere and at any time and say that it is helpful to pray when times are hard. Pupils write prayers for use in worship and they also have the opportunity to pray spontaneously. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have learnt in worship and, in particular, think about different ways in which they can use this in their everyday lives, both in school and when they are at home. Pupils know that Jesus is central to the Christian faith and that people can get to know him through praying, reading the Bible and spending quiet times with him. They have a growing understanding of the relationship between Jesus, God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Pupils are involved well in collective worship and are now taking more responsibility for different aspects. Teachers are fully involved in worship so that it becomes a whole school experience for all participants to engage with and benefit from. School leaders check the quality of collective worship informally but this is not always systematically recorded. However, the school continues to develop collective worship further such as through providing more resources for class teachers to support them in leading worship in their own classes.

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

RE is viewed by the school as an important part of its Christian character. Pupils say that this is a time when they learn more about Jesus. They know a range of Bible stories and are able to relate these well to their own lives. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is further enhanced in RE where the persona characters are used to provide a link between their learning and their personal development. Pupils explore Judaism and are able to recall important facts about the faith and compare these with the Christian faith. This helps to widen their cultural understanding. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced by having regular opportunities to reflect on what they have learnt in RE. This is often related to the school's Christian values. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities to support learning in RE, including using the mediums of dance, drama, cookery and art and craft. The majority of teaching in RE is effective and consequently, pupils make good progress and reach standards of attainment that are at least in line with national expectations and sometimes higher. However, pupils are not always challenged well enough to deepen their understanding of RE. This is sometimes because questions are not designed well enough to enable this to happen. Consequently pupils do not make rapid progress. The relatively new RE leader has started to monitor the quality of RE through observing lessons and as a result has given tailored support to individual members of staff. She has also asked pupils for their views about RE. Through regular meetings she ensures that she is well informed about current developments. This includes the introduction of a new assessment system for RE which has now been established in the school. The RE leader works well with other RE leaders in local schools so that together they can moderate assessments to check that they are accurate. The school recognises that the assessment information could be used effectively to demonstrate the progress of pupils in RE.

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

The Christian character of this inclusive school is an intrinsic part of all that happens. This is because leaders and managers have a strong Christian vision which is based on clearly expressed Christian values that impact exceptionally well on pupils' personal and academic development. As a result pupils are able to talk enthusiastically about the importance of these on their own lives. There are positive relationships with parents who are well aware of the school's Christian values. They express the impact that these are having on their children at home and, along with pupils, experience high levels of care and support. The school's vision is for pupils to continue their spiritual journey after they have left. For example, pupils are presented with a cross on which a specific verse from the Bible has been attached to encourage them in the future. Pupils are individually prayed for as they move into the next stage of their education. There are positive links with the diocese and the local church. Both the local Anglican vicar and curate of St Thomas' Church come to the school regularly to lead acts of worship and parents talk about their positive interaction both with the pupils at the school and the local community. There are also good links with St Thomas' and the local Baptist church that both run 'messy church' which a number of pupils attend. Similarly, there are effective partnerships with the local community, including visits from pupils to a range of homes for the elderly. Staff have received training to support their role within a church school and the recently appointed RE leader is already having a very positive impact on the development of RE. The governing body is very supportive of the school and shares the same vision. They meet annually with school leaders to evaluate the Christian distinctiveness of the school but recognise that they would have more impact by checking this more frequently. There is much informal monitoring by school leaders and governors, which supports the development of the school and areas for development from the previous inspection have largely been addressed. While both school leaders and governors have formally monitored collective worship and RE, these are not consistently analytical, which means that the impact on future development as a result of this monitoring is variable. Nevertheless, the school has an accurate view of its effectiveness as a church school and leaders and managers continue to find ways to improve its Christian distinctiveness further.