

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Peter's Methodist Primary School

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| St Peter's Grove Canterbury CT1 2DH | |
| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Methodist District | South East |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Date of inspection | 21 June 2018 |
| Date of last inspection | 15 November 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary Controlled 118707 |
| Headteacher | Rob Garratt |
| Inspector's name and number | Ian Rimmer 801 |

School context

St Peter's Methodist Primary School is an average-sized primary school serving the local area in the centre of Canterbury. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2013 and a new leadership team is now in place. Just over half the school population is White British. The number of pupils who have English as an additional language is about twice the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter's as a Methodist school are outstanding

- The outstanding Christian leadership of the senior leaders and governing body ensure that the school's distinctive Christian character lies at the heart of daily life making the school the best it can possibly be.
- The school's success in creating a loving, nurturing and inclusive ethos is firmly-rooted in Christian values which strongly influences the well-being and progress of all pupils.
- The excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is particularly strong because it is based upon the school's consistent commitment to its Christian values.
- Strong links with the local Methodist church, variety of Methodist partners and links with other churches develop a clear sense of identity within the Methodist family and wider Christian community.
- Religious education (RE) contributes significantly to determining and strengthening the distinctive Christian character of the school.

Areas to improve

- Continue to carry out the current procedures for self-evaluation so that they become embedded and thus enable the school to consistently meet the needs of all learners as a distinctive church school.

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

The development of the whole child through a strong commitment to distinctively Christian values is the foundation of the school's work. All members of the school community contribute significantly to the daily lives and achievements of learners because they are valued and trusted. Pupils talk about how the Christian values help them to reflect upon their own behaviour and relationships with others so that they might become more like Jesus. This Christ-centred approach underpins the positive relationships in the school and leads to excellent behaviour and the school's success. The SMSC development of every pupil is excellent because they are immersed in a loving and forgiving setting. Pupils describe their school as kind, friendly, joyful, safe and fascinating. The school has identified eleven values and references a verse of scripture alongside each value thus reinforcing for the pupils that they are biblically-based. They are afforded a high priority on the school's website alongside John Wesley's Rule for Christian living. They are friendship, thankfulness, love, compassion, hope, truth, trust, forgiveness, tolerance, reverence and respect. By growing up with the Christian values, pupils display love and respect for others as well as hope and resilience as learners. One pupil talks about carrying out God's messages and goes on to say, 'If you believe, you can do everything'. Pupils value having positions of responsibility around school. They enjoy serving their school community through taking pastoral care for the younger pupils and driving social change in the local community through the school council. They speak about the importance of showing love and compassion for those in need as Jesus would. One parent speaks about how the school develops the ethics of life that everyone should have. This is evident in how the school provided practical support for the local community in the aftermath of a local fire and through its social justice programmes to help the homeless.

On entering the school, the distinctive Christian character stands out through a large display of John Wesley's Rule exemplified in photographs taken around the school community. Close by, a cross made of ceramic tiles depicts the school's Christian values. The entire school environment is characterised by attractive displays and Christian symbols. Reflection areas linked to both Christian values and learning in RE stand out in the classrooms. Pupils talk about how these areas encourage them to pray, reflect and think about God and Jesus. In the Year 4 class, one pupil writes about an open door giving them hope to go to heaven and how God shows them the right way to go. Increasing use is being made of the outdoor space available for worship and reflection.

Pupils learn effectively about faiths other than Christianity through religious education (RE). This promotes their cultural knowledge and respect for diversity and difference within other faith communities. Pupils are inspired by RE as it makes a significant contribution to their SMSC development and strengthens the school's distinctive Christian character. A Year 4 pupil writes, 'God is like music because you can hear him when he speaks to you'.

As a result of decisive action taken by school leaders, tracking shows that high standards of progress and attainment have been maintained in early years and Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 there is rapid and significant improvement. Attendance is very closely monitored and afforded a very high profile through a prominent corridor display and weekly awards presented to the best attending and the most punctual class. As a result of the school's endeavours to do all it can through love and the direct intervention of the family liaison officer, all pupils attend school as much as they can so that learning is as effective as possible. A deep commitment to Christian love, where everyone is encouraged to do the best they can, drives forward behaviour for learning at St Peter's.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. There are strong links between worship, RE and Christian values enabling worship to promote a deeper and living understanding of Jesus Christ across the whole school. As Christian symbols, including three candles lit to reinforce the Trinity, are displayed on a special table at the front of the hall, worship has a clear focal point. Planning is thorough and includes themes based upon Christian values, the Bible and major Christian festivals. Worship is multi-sensory and presents teaching and reflection in simple and creative ways. Consequently, it is fully inclusive in how it engages the whole school community, whatever their age or level of understanding of English. Incorporating sign language into worship songs and John Wesley's rule helps everyone to visualise how these words can influence their daily lives. Pupils confidently embrace opportunities to lead worship and parents value this considerably. Having attended worship led by one of her children's classes, one parent promised to pay more attention to her children's unique talents and further embrace their individuality. Commenting upon an act of worship when a pupil spoke about praying in hope for a friend, a governor wrote about himself feeling the need to pray more often.

As Jesus Christ is central to worship, members of the school community can explain how Christian teaching helps them to relate this to their daily lives. Before the act of worship observed on trust, one staff member formally acknowledged the Christian values lived out by a colleague. The whole school engaged in a dramatised act of worship focusing on Peter's response to Jesus' challenge to trust him on the deep and stormy waters of Lake Galilee. Pupils took opportunities to reflect upon trusting Jesus during life's difficult times and offered personal contributions about when they have trusted in God and others. Through incorporating traditional prayers, pupils'

own prayers relating to the day's theme and personal prayer, the school community embraces the centrality of prayer within daily worship as part of their spiritual journey. Reflecting upon worship and moving onto high school, a Year 6 pupil said, 'This school has helped me prepare for times in life when things get tough by showing me that I can always trust in God'.

Pupils share their own prayers and reflections in their classrooms and in the school grounds. A Year 1 pupil's star prayer in class reads, 'Let us live in love and harmony'. A Year 6 pupil spoke about seeking out opportunities for prayer to help her focus more and seek reassurance from God and Jesus. A number of leaders, including staff and pupils, the Methodist minister, Methodist local preacher and Methodist chaplain of Kent College, as well as other Christian visitors, plan and lead acts of worship in different settings and styles. These make excellent contributions to the school community's spiritual development, reflection and understanding of key Christian celebrations. Visits by the school to the church and from church members to school strengthen the links with the worshipping life of the church and its Methodist tradition. The experienced co-ordinators embrace the wide range of written and oral feedback to ensure that worship is always of the highest quality. Through focused evaluation over time, all daily collective worship now has a consistent structure, incorporates personal prayer and reflection, a powerful sending out message and is followed by practical opportunities for individuals to acknowledge the impact of worship in their daily lives. A Year 2 pupil recently chose to respond to a worship warrior challenge by awarding a sticker to a classmate for living out the value of forgiveness towards them.

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

John Wesley's Rule for Christian living is consistently referred to and applied to everyday contexts. It is re-visited in staff meetings and staff training. As a result, this rule underpins all relationships and behaviour for learning by reinforcing an understanding of the Christian way of life and the Christ-centred values of the school. Clearly drawing upon the school's vision statement, 'Doing all the good we can through faith, love and excellence', school leaders confidently articulate a strong vision for the school community to live out distinctively Christian values within their very diverse local community. Staff and governors are committed to promoting an outstanding Christian learning environment where mutual support and pastoral concern unite both the school and the local community. Leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's performance, current priorities and strategies for improvement. They readily demonstrate how aspects of pupils development and well-being are nurtured through biblical teaching and Christian values. They speak about how pupils have developed more resilience as learners. A Year 4 pupil spoke about developing her competencies in the challenging area of computer coding. This shows that an area identified for development at the previous inspection has been fully met.

The appointment of a family liaison officer and pupil mentor as well as the assistant head's role as inclusion leader demonstrate commitment to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable pupils. Governors speak about their school in terms of the distinctive Christian values being very real and lived out daily by everyone. Governors clearly understand their role and are highly committed to supporting the school in many ways. These involve challenging school leadership at governors' meetings and monitoring the standard of church school distinctiveness through focused learning walks and observing worship. The governors' rigorous monitoring and evaluation strategies to rapidly raise pupils' attainment have led to standards measurably improving recently. However, these systems are recent and have still to be embedded. Pupils appreciate their friends and teachers giving them hope to achieve what they initially think they cannot do. Parents say that the school uplifts each child within a family atmosphere where everyone strives for excellence. Explaining that their children's happiness and success are rooted firmly in the Christian values, parents say that their children feel valued, are tolerant and thoughtful to others. Parents are confident that their children will continue to make their community a better place.

The school community values the weekly worship in St Peter's Methodist church, visits from church members and special services throughout the year as well as the practical support for the parents' association and the popular celebration show of the pupils' talents. Links with the wider Methodist family serve to further enrich the school's spiritual and faith experiences in line with its Methodist foundation. Links are strong with other Christian visitors and the cathedral so that the school and wider church work together to provide an outstanding Christian education. Excellent use is made for staff to access continuing professional development through local collaborative learning networks as well as national leadership programmes. As a result staff bring knowledge and confidence to promote church school development. Through further partnership work with other educational establishments sharing the same distinctive Christian character, governors and senior staff show a clear commitment to responding to those current and future needs for church school development. These partners include Kent College, the Director of Education for the Methodist church and a local Methodist primary school. Collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. These are monitored and evaluated thoroughly so that areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection have been fully addressed. Thus procedures for assessment of RE and adopting the Understanding Christianity teaching resource are embedded across the school.