



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

**St Georges VA Church Primary School,**

**Pastures Ave., St Georges, Weston-super-Mare. BS22 7SA**

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Bath & Wells**

Local authority: North Somerset

Date of inspection: 23rd February, 2016

Date of last inspection: 8th February 2011

School's unique reference number: 134830

Headteacher: Sandra Medley

Inspector's name and number: Rev John Angle 119

### School context

St Georges Primary School opened in 2006 and serves families living on a large estate of mixed social and private housing on the outskirts of Weston-Super-Mare. There are 209 children on roll with an additional 23 Nursery children. The majority of children are from a white British heritage background. The number of children with special educational needs is above the national average. There is no denominational church in St Georges but the school has strong partnerships with several churches in the area. The school was graded Requires Improvement by Ofsted in 2014 and subsequent Ofsted monitoring visits have acknowledged the school's efforts to address issues. The school is due to join the Bath & Wells Multi Academy Trust.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Georges VA Primary School as a Church School are good

- Effective management and inspirational spiritual leadership promotes a strong Christian ethos and vision which influences all aspects of school life
- Local ecumenical partnerships are effective and influential in maintaining a prayerful and distinctively Christian community.
- Through aspects of the curriculum, particularly Collective Worship and Religious Education, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly encouraged. This has a transformational effect on their personal development and well being.

### Areas to improve

- Ensure the learning needs of all children are fully met, in line with the school's Christian ethos and foundation
- Strengthen assessment and evaluation of the school's Christian character in order to ensure continued and sustained improvement.

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

A Christian vision and values permeate the daily life of the school. The whole community lives out the school's values in a warm family atmosphere and everyone works together to enable children to be safe and secure. Expressions of the school's Christian character contribute effectively to children's learning, personal well being and development. The school, motivated by Christian values of care and concern, are seeking the very best for all children, and staff are making sustained efforts to raise academic standards and enable all children to achieve their best. The school's Christian character is very effectively supported by a strong partnership with nearby Anglican, Methodist and Baptist churches. Attendance is above average because children love their school and enjoy coming to school. Children know they are valued individually as made in the image of God and respond by living in respectful, tolerant and caring relationships with each other, and by supporting charities and activities in the community. One girl expressed it this way "The world would be a better place if everyone loved their neighbour!" Staff model Christian values and work together well, demonstrating support and empathy even in challenging times. Children behave well and opportunities for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. For instance the 'Oasis', the school's church room with its beautiful stained glass window designed by children, a quiet reflective area, a prayer tree, crosses displayed around the school and displays in class rooms and in corridors. Candles in the foyer remind children that however they feel, the Christian message is that God is with them. Parents and carers speak very positively about the quality of support, care and education their children receive at the school, particularly the most vulnerable. The school's open door policy which gives them access to support and guidance at the earliest opportunity is much appreciated.

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

The daily act of collective worship is regarded by all as an integral and important part of the daily life of the school community. It is distinctively Christian and reflects the spirituality that is well embedded and permeates all aspects of school life. Collective worship is inspirational, engaging, relevant to children's lives and inclusive and respectful of the experiences and views of all. It gives children and staff an opportunity to experience God's presence and develop an understanding of the spiritual dimension of life and its implications for relationships, culture and moral values. Worship also raises aspirations and encourages responsible choices. Parents and carers enjoy attending collective worship and also special services during the school year. The worship policy is comprehensive and states the aims of worship, as times for nurturing the 'whole child'. Worship is well planned, including the exploration of Christian values within the context of Biblical material. Children enjoy collective worship and are very confident and eager to participate and often to lead. Their leadership is one of the outstanding features of the school's worship. The prayer life of the school is strong; children will say the Lord's Prayer, some will offer spontaneous prayers. They know various responses. Children understand the value of personal prayer as part of their own spiritual journey and respond positively when given opportunities for quiet reflection. Within worship, children respond to challenges to consider their attitudes and take responsibility for their actions. This often leads to charitable support and expressions of care within the school or local community and is sometimes reflected in the work of the School Council and the Eco Group. Worship experiences are made meaningful for all learners by visual and tactile aids such as the Lord's Prayer cube, holding crosses, candles and a varied range of music, sometimes with actions or Makaton signing. The use of coloured cloths gives children an understanding of the liturgical seasons of the Christian year. Aspect of the life, person and teachings of Jesus are central to all acts of collective worship and the children have a growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All staff lead worship; INSET, resources and guidance are available to give support. Visitors representing the three denominations of the school's unique ecumenical status give regular, welcome and inspirational leadership and offer children a rich experience of Christian worship and enhance their understanding of various church traditions and practices. Governors regularly evaluate collective

worship and children and staff informally discuss their experience of worship in order to inform the future nature and style of collective worship and ensure its continued development.

### **The effectiveness of religious education is outstanding**

RE is outstanding in the way it effectively promotes religious understanding and supports the spiritual life of children and the Christian character of the school. Pupil's achievement is at least in line with national expectations and equal to comparable subjects in the school curriculum. Assessment is thorough, and follows the methodology of the 'Discovery RE' scheme of work, used to support the agreed syllabus. Attainment and progress are monitored well, through classroom observation and written material in journals and portfolios of work, and effective feedback is given to children so they know their 'next steps'. Pupils enjoy RE and are stimulated by outstanding and inspiring teaching to reflect deeply and creatively on spiritual and moral issues, religious ideas and concepts. They respond with maturity to open ended questions and creative and imaginative learning activities, such as speed debating, 'safe seat' activities, drama and role play. RE is related to pupils' own life experiences; for instance teachers make Biblical stories relevant to life in the twenty first century. Children are encouraged and motivated by RE, and therefore demonstrate a desire to find out more about themselves and their own feelings and beliefs. They demonstrate excellent knowledge of the Bible, Christian faith and practice and other religions and beliefs. For instance, in a lesson observed children showed a growing understanding of the Trinity and explored other questions such as: was Jesus special, was he human or divine? Is anything eternal?; where is heaven?; what does the word redemption mean and was the death of Jesus good or bad? Children are able to engage in religious and spiritual exploration because teachers have a **very** high level of subject expertise. The subject leader gives **outstanding** support and advice to staff and monitors teaching and learning effectively, having high expectations and encouraging improvements. RE makes an **outstanding** contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and particularly to their understanding of Christianity, different religions and cultures and how these relate to British values.

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

In line with the school's Christian ethos and foundation, senior staff and governors have worked tirelessly to address the issues raised by the 2014 Ofsted inspection, and this has been recognised in subsequent HMI monitoring visits. There has been a thorough and determined process of research and evaluation which has led to effective and successful strategies for improvement. The school now needs to embed these improvements, coming in line with other outstanding aspects of the life of the school. The Headteacher strongly encourages a vibrant Christian vision for the school. Her leadership, both spiritual and educational, inspires all members of the school community to be firmly rooted in Christian principles and to uphold Christian values. All senior staff and managers understand and live out the Christian ethos of the school. This has a positive impact on the lives of the children and the wider school community. The governors have a positive relationship with school staff and are now giving more effective support and challenge. Meeting the needs of all learners and helping them to overcome educational, social and economic disadvantage is a fundamental principle for staff and governors, who believe all children are valued and made in the image of God and deserve to be equipped to achieve the best that they can. The school's Christian vision is made explicit in policies and to parents, and under-pins the day to day life of the school. The SMSC Policy is outstanding, with practical teaching ideas for ensuring children can be safe and secure and that all feel included. Religious Education and collective worship are given a high priority. All staff are supported and inspired to promote the school's Christian character through opportunities for reflection and prayer during INSET and at staff meetings and by attending training for church school leadership provided by the Diocese. In addition the school's Christian vision is explained at staff recruitment and a level of agreement expected from prospective candidates. Governors are making strategic plans for the future leadership and management of this church school and the continuance of its foundational Christian character, by seeking to ensure committed Christian

leadership and by planning to join the Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust. Parents, carers and members of the wider community make a strong contribution to the life of the school. Ecumenical partnerships with local churches give prayerful and practical support to the Christian life of the school and help to maintain the school's strong Christian character. These relationships also help to fulfil the foundational vision that the school itself should be a place of worship at the heart of the St Georges community.

SIAMS report. February 2016. St Georges VA Church School. Weston-super-Mare. BS227SA