



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Mary's Bentworth Church of England Primary School	Church St, Bentworth, Alton, GU34 5RE
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese/Methodist District	Winchester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Outstanding
Local authority	Hampshire
Name of multi-academy trust/ federation	N/A
Date/s of inspection	5 October 2016
Date of last inspection	7 October 2011
School's unique reference number	116351
Headteacher	Jo Ayres
Inspector's name and number	Richard Blackmore 857

School context

St Mary's Bentworth is a smaller than average-sized voluntary aided (VA) primary school, located at the heart of the community that it serves. There are currently 87 children on roll, a small proportion of whom are entitled to free school meals. The number of children with special educational needs is below the national average. Since the last inspection, there have been significant staffing changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's Bentworth as a Church of England school are outstanding

- An exceptionally clear Christian vision and set of values is at the heart of all that the school does. The conviction with which this vision and the values of 'Love, Respect, Belong' is promoted by leaders, including governors, ensures the school's success in meeting the academic and spiritual needs of all children.
- There is highly effective Christian leadership and a committed staff team who demonstrate Christian values in the way they live and work.
- The Christian environment enables positive attitudes amongst pupils, who become confident learners and achieve well, especially in collective worship and religious education [RE].

Areas to improve

Develop the assessment procedures in RE in order to improve teachers' understanding of the rate at which children make progress in order that any attainment gaps can be addressed.

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

The explicit Gospel values that the school embraces are central to all aspects of school life and make a significant impact. The children demonstrate a very sound understanding of these values and know that they form the basis of actions and decisions made. Children of all ages also have a strong sense of belonging to the parish and can demonstrate how they make a difference in their school, locally, nationally and globally. The school council have initiated a number of fund raising ventures such as Children in Need. The school is highly effective in developing and expanding spiritual experiences that support learning. Children benefit from a rich and varied creative curriculum that goes beyond the classroom and ensures that children achieve well and develop very good personal skills. Relationships are exemplary in this school where Christian values are seen throughout and effectively promote the well-being of pupils. Pupils say they value their teachers and their friends, with some pupils aspiring to be teachers because of the excellent role models they have seen. Pupils here thrive and feel able to make a positive contribution because they are expected to take on positions of responsibility and know that what they offer to the school will be valued. Bright, prominent, interactive displays, together with quiet prayer spaces in classrooms greatly enhance pupils' spiritual development. The school's ethos has clear impact on the children's academic achievement. This is because the high expectations the staff have for all children develops their key skills simultaneously and seamlessly alongside their personal qualities. Effective use is being made of classroom reflection areas as well as the extensive outdoor learning facilities which excite and motivate children to learn. Special events and trips, such as the trip to Woking mosque, make a positive and long lasting contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Religious education also makes a very significant contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding. This also helps to shape pupils' acute understanding of different communities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The attitude of pupils to collective worship is excellent because the quality of worship excites, absorbs and totally engages the children. It is well planned and covers Christian themes with a strong emphasis on Christian values and on important Christian festivals. It also creatively reinforces the school's own values. This enables children to have a very good understanding of the nature of worship, the Christian faith and Anglican traditions and practice. The prominent place of prayer across the school ensures that worship is a spiritual experience of real significance. Consequently, pupils value prayer and are confident in praying aloud in whole school collective worship. Pupils are keen to be involved and lead in worship, especially drama and they do so maturely and with great enthusiasm. Teachers are involved in leading worship, and the vicar and other teams such as the 'Open the Book' group lead whole school worship on a regular basis. Worship helps to develop a deep understanding of Jesus and God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Monitoring, planning and evaluating are outstanding and include contributions from pupils, staff and governors to inform future school worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education is important in this school and pupils clearly enjoy their RE lessons. The teaching and learning is of a consistently high standard. Children make very good progress in RE, as is evidenced in discussion and written work. Standards are at least in line and often above those attained in other core subjects. Pupils know how to improve in their work because marking and feedback is of the same very effective quality as seen in core subjects. Teachers ensure that children are robustly challenged through a wide variety of questions and statements that provoke much thought. For example, in a Year 6 lesson an excellent set of prompts for discussion included 'God has control over the whole world' and 'God is like a conscience in our minds'. As a result of this provision, RE lessons are of real rigour and quality and are continually sharpened further through high calibre monitoring by

senior leaders. RE is very well led and managed by the deputy headteacher, who demonstrates clear purpose and sense of direction in leading initiatives to continually raise standards of attainment. Teachers have a shared commitment to improving standards and recognise RE as a key subject in the school. Children have a good knowledge of the Bible and the life of Jesus and their knowledge of other major world faiths is excellent. They talk confidently and maturely about how other people worship God, recognising and valuing similarities and differences. The school is effective in using data to track children's achievement in reading, writing and mathematics but it is more limited in RE.

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

The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has a clear vision for the development of the school as a Church school and impacts very positively on the children's academic achievement and the special character of the school. She is very well supported by the school community. Governors work in partnership with senior leaders to monitor and evaluate the work of the school, ensuring that church school issues are at the heart of the school's improvement planning. Collective worship and RE have a high status in school and meet the statutory requirements. Christian leadership, succession planning and roles and responsibilities are excellently supported through well planned professional development and involvement in diocesan training and meetings, which is seen as a priority. This has helped leaders and governors to have been successful in ensuring that the personal growth needs of the children are met. In doing so they have recognised the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. The school values its relationship with parents and recognises its importance in their aspirations for each individual child. The exceptionally strong links with the church and local community have a significant impact upon the Christian character of the school, exerting a positive influence on the lives of all members of the school family. Very effective use is made of partnerships with the diocese and other local schools, including the Alton Church school group. The pupil voice is strong; children are confident that their opinions are valued and acted upon. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school, one summing up their views by describing the school as 'absolutely fantastic'.