



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

### St Peter's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Mount Pleasant,  
Aylesford,  
Kent  
ME20 7BE

**Diocese: Rochester**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Date of last inspection: 10 December 2010

School's unique reference number: 118617

Headteacher: Mrs Joyce Rhodes (acting headteacher)

Inspector's name and number: Mr Richard Tyson NS no 787

#### School context

St Peter's Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average one form entry school. The large majority of pupils, drawn mainly from Aylesford, are of a White British background. About 10 percent are from church going families. The school has recently undergone a period of considerable instability. From September 2013, an acting headteacher was appointed together with an almost entirely new teaching staff.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter's as a Church of England school is good

- The distinctive Christian vision of all school leaders has provided the firm foundation for improvements since 2013.
- The stable learning environment allows most pupils to achieve and is underpinned by a clear sense of Christian purpose.
- Stakeholders value the bedrock of stability which the Christian character of the school provides.
- The Christian values of the school contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils through the taught curriculum and through extra-curricular activities.
- The school recognises the importance of Religious Education (RE) which makes a positive contribution to the Christian character of the school.

#### Areas to improve

- To embed the school's Christian values so that the levels of progress for all pupils

consistently meet national standards and so that the most vulnerable pupils in the school make the same progress as other pupils.

- To ensure that the values of the school are consistently communicated and understood by all stakeholders as distinctively Christian values.
- To implement more formal systems of monitoring, evaluation and professional development for RE and for all aspects of collective worship.

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

The school has clearly defined Christian values that are shared and understood by most within the school as distinctively Christian values. These positive values model characteristics of an aspirational school that has high expectations and standards. They create a stable learning environment in which all are encouraged to make good progress and where many increasingly do so. Within some year groups, not all pupils are consistently meeting national standards with some vulnerable students underachieving compared to their peers. The values of the school inspire pupils to think about their own identity and help them to understand the perspectives and needs of others. Typical of such insight was when a pupil was able to relate the school values of love and respect to the story of the Good Samaritan and Jesus' command to 'love our neighbour no matter who they are.' Teachers and school leaders are consistent in their application of the school values in every aspect of the life of the school. This has led most pupils to understand the importance of the values and how they relate to the Christian character of the school. This is most notable in the systems put in place to ensure the good behaviour of pupils. The Christian character of the school also defines the school's approach to 'going the extra mile' to promote good attendance and to avoid pupils being excluded from school. The school has an extensive extra-curricular programme that is monitored to ensure that all pupils participate in some aspect of it. This makes a significant contribution to the confidence and well being of all pupils. Christian values in the taught curriculum and extra curricular activities encourage pupils to look beyond their own interests and to the needs of others locally and globally. Pupils enjoy RE and understand its importance. RE makes a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

Collective worship is valued across the school community and is now central to the daily routines of the school. Pupils respond well to it and can readily talk about what it means. The themes of worship are well organised and follow the seasons of the Church's year. Through worship, pupils gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are able to do this through creatively led and tightly planned whole school worship that is increasingly allowing pupils to meaningfully reflect upon central aspects of Christianity. Pupils are also beginning to be given more opportunities to lead worship. Particular strengths of the school are the engagement with biblical stories and how prayer is encouraged. Classes use formal and informal prayer at different times of the school day to support pupils in their daily lives. Prayer within collective worship also plays an important role in unifying the school community around their central values. A range of staff and the incumbent lead whole school worship and are provided with strong informal support by the school leadership. Pupils also benefit from visitors who lead worship such as the Family Trust providing a rich variety of worship styles. The school benefits from a strong relationship with the incumbent (who is also a governor). This has fostered a strong culture of dialogue between the headteacher, RE co-ordinator and incumbent which has resulted in a deeper theological basis for worship. This understanding also allows for pupils to experience and understand the breadth of traditions within the Anglican church, for example, in understanding the different ways in which Christians pray. In turn, this permeates through to teachers who pay close attention to their pupils' spiritual and moral needs in order to make worship relevant and

meaningful. The impact of this is generally good as most pupils can relate worship to their own lives and how they can be of service to others. However, resources for class worship are less formally organised and not formally monitored. Weekly worship at St Peter's church enriches the worship life of the school and engages pupils, parents and governors. The centrality of the church in the worshipping life of the school allows pupils to be more confident in exploring their spirituality. Over the last year, this has been shown through the majority of pupils attending church holiday clubs and the 'Easter Experience' event in the church.

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

The acting headteacher and RE co-ordinator began working at the school just over a year ago following a period of considerable instability. From the outset, they articulated a Christian vision for renewal that has resulted in routines and structures that have Christian values at their heart. These have been central to establishing a stable learning environment in which pupils can begin to achieve, make progress and flourish. In some cases, this progress has been rapid, due to the targeted interventions of the headteacher. The process of defining the Christian values of the school has been rooted in a shared understanding of Christian belief and the relevance of biblical stories. This has meant that values are shared and understood by almost all of the school community. As a result, they have been able to make a discernible impact in the school. This has been particularly evident in the improved behaviour of pupils. It has also helped to unify the school and deepen its commitment to being a distinctive Christian witness within the local and global community. The headteacher has an incisive understanding of the school's performance based upon rigorous self evaluation of pupils' achievements and progress. This has shaped planning and led to improvements for some pupils. The robustness of self evaluation has laid strong foundations for improving the progress and achievement of all pupils. The school's professional development programme has made a significant impact in ensuring consistency of standards and assessment in RE. It has also supported teachers in leading worship and teaching RE effectively. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. A fuller understanding is emerging of how to lead and improve the quality of learning within RE. However, there is a lack of formal systems for the monitoring, evaluation and professional development in collective worship and aspects of RE. The school has begun to consider how it can develop staff and governors as leaders of church schools. Supported by strong links with the diocese, the governors have begun to articulate a clear Christian vision and insight for the future leadership of the school.

SIAMS report October 2014 St Peter's Church of England (VC) Primary School, ME20 7BE