



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Margaret's, Lee CE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Lee Church Street
Lewisham
SE13 5SG

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Southwark

Local authority: Lewisham

Date of inspection: 10 February 2015

Date of last inspection: January 2010

School's unique reference number: 100742

Headteacher: Ian Wilson

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

School context

St Margaret's, Lee is an averaged sized, high achieving Church of England voluntary aided primary school serving a racially and religiously diverse area. There are more girls than boys on roll. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below average whilst those for whom Pupil Premium funding is received due to social disadvantage is average. Around one third of pupils come from practising Christian backgrounds, from a range of Christian denominations. In November 2014 the school was judged by OfSTED as 'outstanding'.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Margaret's, Lee as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school is extremely well led. There are effective strategies for developing and monitoring the impact of its Christian ethos and values on its life and work
- The worship programme and religious education (RE) make significant contributions to the school's Christian ethos and to the very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- There are very strong and mutually beneficial links between the school and the parish church and indeed the wider community

Areas to improve

- Revisit the school's mission statement so that each aspect of it makes explicit reference to the school's Christian motivation
- Ensure that some of the more complex Christian concepts such as 'the Trinity' are further developed, in age-appropriate ways, through both RE and worship

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

Standards are high and pupils of all ability levels make very good progress in this welcoming and caring Christian school. The school takes its Christian foundation very seriously, seeing it as underpinning its support for all pupils both academically and personally. As a result the well-being of pupils is given a very high priority. Pupils feel safe and happy and consequently they want to learn and absence rates are very low. 'It's all about the children' as one staff member remarked. The school's Christian values are explicit and modelled on the life and teaching of Jesus. At the same time they are inclusive of all, irrespective of faith position. There are twelve values, including respect, humility, generosity and justice. These are well known and lived out by pupils and staff alike. As a governor said, the Christian ethos and values are 'woven into the fabric of the school'. The Christian values are explored in depth in worship where links to biblical teaching is highlighted. They are also considered appropriately in RE and indeed across the curriculum. They are used as a basis for considering how pupils should act towards others. Behaviour is exemplary, 'impeccable' as a visitor to the school commented recently. On the few occasions where behaviour is not as positive as it should be the school's values, 'the St Margaret's Way' is used to help develop understanding and rectify any issues. Relationships are strong and mutually respectful.

Pupils' respond very well to the excellent, and wide-ranging, opportunities provided for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through worship, in RE and more widely across the school. Pupils see charitable giving as an expression of the school's Christian ethos. Worship and RE, supported by Philosophy for Children approaches, makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. This is through the content addressed and the learning approaches used which effectively promote high level thinking, questioning and reflection.

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

High quality worship takes place daily. It is well linked to a wide range of explicitly Christian values and the Christian year. During the half term of the inspection the focus was on 'respect'. Biblical stories and Christian teachings play a central part in worship. Major Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter are also celebrated. This makes a very effective contribution to pupils' detailed understanding of the school's values and the Christian year. Worship is thoroughly planned by senior leaders and the RE/worship co-ordinator. Pupils and staff join in worship respectfully and with enthusiasm. As one pupil's response to one of the regular pupil questionnaires wrote, 'Worship is important because you can reflect and it makes you feel free'. Pupils recognise the importance of prayer for Christians and in their own lives. They know and recite, with understanding, the school prayer, the half-termly 'values prayer' and the Lord's Prayer. Worship is enjoyed and makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian ethos and community feel. The high quality and variety provided through worship in school and in the parish church has a significant and positive impact on pupils' personal development and contributes significantly to their spiritual and moral development. Pupils reflect in worship on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit as individual Persons but do not reflect on the Unity of the Trinity in a detailed way. The school's leadership team have recognised this and there are clear plans in place to develop understanding of this element of Christian belief about God. Elements of Anglican worship such as lighting candles and using versicles and responses are embedded. Pupils respond very positively to these elements of worship. Worship is specifically Christian. It is presented sensitively and so is inclusive of those of other faiths and none.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Across the school pupils are achieving very well in RE. Their attainment and progress is in line with Literacy and Mathematics and largely above national expectations. The quantity and quality of written work is very good, as is the quality of discussion and reflection. Pupils enjoy RE and take part in lessons with a great deal of enthusiasm. Pupils recognise the importance of learning not only about the Christian faith but also about other faiths. As one pupil remarked, 'I like RE lessons because they help me think about how my beliefs are different to others. They also make me realise how many people believe similar things. They help me picture my beliefs and others' really clearly'. The school, drawing on the Diocesan scheme of work, has developed a range of practical, reflective and interesting

approaches to teaching. Each half term, in each class, opportunities for discussion, extended writing and a creative activity (for example art or drama) are provided. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the different approaches. 'RE lessons are always really exciting and interactive. They are fun and you learn a lot,' is a comment from a pupil which exemplifies the positive attitudes that exists towards the subject. In an outstanding Year 2 lesson pupils were fully engaged in learning about the importance of the Hajj for Muslims. There were a range of appropriate activities, including discussion, singing and simulating in appropriate ways different elements of the Hajj. The lesson concluded with pupils making a video diary as if they were on Hajj. Recently, a structured approach to helping pupils address philosophical and ethical issues linked to RE and the wider curriculum has been introduced. This has already had a significant impact in building on the already very good learning taking place. Pupils are very confident in presenting their ideas and in listening respectfully and thoughtfully to others 'We've done some philosophy in RE which makes you ask more questions instead of answering them.' The quality of discussion and reflection in RE lessons is very high as exemplified in an outstanding Year 6 RE lessons seen focusing on whether or not God is 'good'. The effective RE co-ordinator has focused appropriately on developing the curriculum and supporting teachers in delivering it. Consequently, teachers' confidence in and enjoyment when teaching RE has improved. RE is rightly valued and treated as a 'core subject' alongside literacy and mathematics. This supports pupils in seeing its importance within this church school.

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

Academic standards are high when compared with both local authority and national averages. Pupils make very good progress across the school. Pupils' learning is carefully planned for and monitored. This is linked to the school's mission statement which sets high expectations within a happy, safe and caring Christian community. The mission statement is over three years old and does not fully reflect recent developments in the school and indeed development within church school education more generally.

Governors are appropriately well-informed and engaged with the school, setting and monitoring standards and articulating the Christian vision. The link governor for RE and worship provides support and guidance appropriately to the subject leader. The professional needs of staff are taken seriously. Effective use is made of Diocesan support for both the subject leader and newly qualified teachers. The headteacher has recently become involved in supporting the development of another church primary school in the area. This sharing of ideas and expertise is spurring further development in each school. Senior leaders and the RE/worship co-ordinator meet regularly with the 'faith group'. These pupils are drawn from across the school and from Christian, other faith and no faith positions. They have a role in evaluating worship and RE. Many of their suggestions for improvement have been taken on board. For example increasing the use of high quality pupil work for display in each classroom's reflection area and using more drama in RE lessons and worship to aid understanding and enjoyment.

There are positive and mutually beneficial links enjoyed with the parish church and growing links with other churches and indeed other faith community leaders. This is broadening children's understanding and building even stronger links with the wider community. Parents value the school as a caring, inclusive Christian community which has the academic and personal development of their children at its heart.

Issues identified for improvement since the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The school's current self evaluation of itself as a church school is both accurate and helpful in setting the course for further development and improvement. The worship and RE programmes are well linked and meet statutory requirements for a voluntary aided school

SIAMS report February 2015 St Margaret's Lee CE Primary School, Dacre Park, Lewisham, SE13 5SQ