



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Yarmouth Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Mill Road
Yarmouth
Isle of Wight
PO41 0RA

Current inspection grade: Good

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Portsmouth and Winchester

Local authority: Isle of Wight

Date of inspection: 10 June 2015

Date of last inspection: 19 May 2010

School's unique reference number: 118194

Headteacher: Beryl Miller

Inspector's name and number: Julia Welford 576

School context

Yarmouth is a small primary school federated with another local Church school. The school has expanded rapidly more recently and now has 85 pupils in roll. A higher proportion of pupils than average have special needs or are in receipt of pupil premium funding. The school is divided into three classes which are extending to four next term. Most pupils are of white British heritage. The headteacher is retiring at the end of the academic year but will continue to support the school as a consultant. The school is situated in the town and the parish church of St James is within walking distance.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Yarmouth as a Church of England school are good

- The very well developed Christian ethos contributes significantly to the well-being of the whole school community; this is as a result of the strong leadership of the Headteacher, with the support of staff and the Governing Body
- The leadership of RE, which is linked to the development of a new syllabus within the school, is having a very positive impact on the teaching and learning of the subject.
- Pupils' spirituality is developing well through a range of experiences within the school community and this may be seen particularly within Collective Worship.

Areas to improve

- Effectively link aspects of Collective Worship to the teaching and learning in RE and the school curriculum to promote improved understanding.
- Further develop Collective Worship to encourage child initiated leadership and participation.
- Widen the children's cultural understanding and experiences to increase pupils' understanding of and respect for diverse communities.

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

Pupils, parents, staff and governors speak with respect and enthusiasm about the distinctive Christian values promoted in the school and their positive impact on pupil achievement, relationships and well-being. The three core Christian values of Respect, Determination and Relationships are clearly understood by the school community and are proudly displayed within the school. There are reflection areas in every classroom. The school offers a safe and happy environment where pupils are supported by staff and their peers as could be seen when observing lessons and at other times of the school day. Through their manner and actions, caring staff emulate the drive and dedication of the headteacher to 'live out' the inclusive and friendly Christian ethos. They are committed to enabling each pupil to succeed as pupils develop self-esteem build positive relationships and a motivation for learning. The school continues to welcome new pupils transferring in at various stages of their primary career, including those with additional needs. The newly appointed SENCo is aware of intervention strategies that may be required and acts quickly to put these in place. Pupils are keen to help those less fortunate than themselves through fundraising for various charities both locally and abroad, for example by raising funds to help victims of the earthquake in Nepal. The school environment makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development and reflects the Christian character well with displays celebrating pupils' learning in RE and books of prayers that pupils have written and continue to use. Pupils work well together and support each other when they need help. Good progress and learning was observed when careful planning, combined with focused support, enthused and challenged them. Newsletters include Bible verses that are affirming and supportive. The Leavers' Service takes place in Portsmouth Cathedral and pupils look forward to attending this special service. The school is distinctively Christian, yet balances this with a respect for the inclusion of people of no faith and pupils interviewed from the Junior Leadership Team were able to articulate this.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and is an important focus each day. The content and delivery of worship is good, engaging pupils fully as they enter into singing and prayer willingly and with a sense of reverence. Pupils enter worship with a candle and cross from each class, drawing them into the worship. The lighting of a candle at the start of worship acts as a reminder of the special time that is to follow. Pupils respond well to this and to the opportunities for reflection and prayer with appropriate respect and reverence. One of the worship songs observed was written by the worship leaders, detailing the fruits of the Spirit, and this was sung with great energy and enthusiasm. Pupils often contribute to collective worship through writing prayers, answering questions and role-play. They look forward to worship as a special part of their day. Prayer is given a high priority in both collective worship and in the school in general. Pupils are confident both in making up their own prayers and in articulating them publicly as several did spontaneously in the worship observed. They pray frequently about events in the news that have affected them; however, other opportunities for pupils to plan and lead whole school worship have so far been limited. Pupils say that they enjoy their daily time of collective worship in school, singing uplifting Christian songs and praying together. The act of worship observed was inspiring and through drama encouraged pupils to rely on Jesus to ease their burdens. Pupils say they enjoy helping adult worship leaders and readily volunteer to take on roles and responsibilities. The person of Jesus figures strongly in worship, so the pupils understand his importance. They are developing an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but as yet find this more difficult to describe. Worship is held in the parish church at special festivals such as Harvest and Christmas and parents expressed a wish for worship in the church to feature more regularly throughout the year. The candle prayer was displayed so that all pupils could participate. Planning, policy, evaluation and staff training for collective worship are in place and supported across the federation of schools.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education is thoughtfully planned and taught. It is led by an experienced co-ordinator with a very good understanding of the value of RE. There are positive links to other faiths and the school organises visits to a mosque and synagogue. The RE leader can already see the improvement in learning through trialling a more enquiry based syllabus called Living Difference and assessment was showing 'deeper thinking'. This syllabus is newly introduced and is yet to become embedded in normal practice throughout the school in the delivery of RE. The RE leader is well supported to introduce new initiatives and evaluate the impact of RE. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective and they were enthusiastically engaged in their learning during the RE lessons observed. Aspects of learning in RE are well integrated into the wider Early Years & Foundation Stage (EYFS). Their early steps in the subject provide the children with a sound platform for their later progress and in the lesson observed links were made to 'Relationships' as a core school value. All lessons were well presented with good pace and relevant use of resources and appropriate differentiation. Standards of attainment in RE for the large majority of learners are in line with national expectations. Pupils acquire a very good understanding of Christianity and are developing their knowledge of a range of other world religions. A pupil in Year 1 had written, 'The story means you put your trust in those you love to avoid disaster'. They enjoy the subject because they are offered a range of learning activities and experiences. Good use is made of class and paired discussions during RE. ICT is effectively used to support the subject and in one lesson observed effective use was made of an iPad application. The teaching of RE is moving from weekly lessons to a more in-depth, week long focus on a particular theme and the impact of this approach will be monitored.

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

The vision and spiritual leadership of the Headteacher is well supported by the whole school community. The Headteacher, senior leadership team and governors across the federation strongly support and drive the Christian ethos in the school and have correctly evaluated its effectiveness, identifying areas for further development. The SIAMS/Church schools committee across both schools meet every half term to review collective worship and RE. The Governing Body ensure the Christian ethos is monitored effectively, using a menu of activities including assessment and learning walks. Parents, staff and pupils are proud of the school's Christian character and parents particularly like how inclusive and welcoming the school is, citing the inclusion of a disabled pupil. Communication with parents is strong and parents are highly supportive of the school, recognising that the nurturing family atmosphere and school's values have a strong impact on their children's wellbeing. The headteacher and staff are very good role models for pupils and help them to understand what it means to part of a Christian family. The federation with another Church school supports teaching, curriculum development and governance. Collective worship is led by teachers, members of the local Christian community and local vicar. As members of the Junior Leadership Team, pupils feel that they are consulted and are able to influence matters that concern them. The pupils were also enthusiastic about worship led by the local 'Open the Book' team and appreciate this variety of approaches to help them understand Bible stories as it makes them come alive for them. Effective leadership of religious education and collective worship ensures that they have a high profile within the life of the school. Staff receive appropriate training to ensure that their good practice is both maintained and improved. RE and collective worship are well managed and contribute significantly to the school's Christian character. The federation has a family support worker who supports pupils and families across both schools. The school works in partnership with the Diocese to evaluate its work, provide training such as 'Spirituality' and to ensure that standards continue to rise. The school fulfils statutory requirements for collective worship and RE.