



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### John Mayne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

High Street  
Biddenden  
Ashford  
TN27 8AL

**Previous SIAS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 12 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 13 January 2011

School's unique reference number: 313035

Headteacher: Melanie Williams

Inspector's name and number: Jane Garrett 618

#### School context

John Mayne Primary is a smaller than average sized village school with 136 children on roll. The pupils are mainly white British with a very small proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Most children live in Biddenden but a few come from further afield. The last OFSTED inspection judged the overall effectiveness of the school as good.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of John Mayne Primary School as a Church of England school is outstanding

- The shared vision of the headteacher, staff, governors and church is rooted in the school's Christian values and permeates all areas of school life
- Potential barriers to learning are minimised through strong pastoral support and individualised learning
- Strong links between school and church mean that it is difficult to know where the influence and work of one ends and the other begins.

#### Areas to improve

- Incorporate the theology of the trinity into collective worship more regularly
- Develop opportunities for prayer and reflection in the school grounds.

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

The school has a distinctly Christian character which is clearly articulated and known by all groups in

the school community as a result of an on- going explicit Christian vision over time. Staff give freely of their time to support children in reaching their full potential. This is evidenced through additional help given to individual pupils to help them succeed in maths with excellent results. Through links with the church and a local secondary school a maths project is being set up for the more able children. There are six values: thankfulness, compassion, forgiveness, reverence, endurance and friendship. These are clearly on display around the school and referred to in collective worship, religious education (RE) and everyday life. It is impressive the way in which children are able to apply them not only to their own lives but also world situations such as the Syrian crisis. They can also relate the values to various Bible stories, for example friendship was linked to the story of David and Jonathan. Interactive displays are used by pupils to investigate how the school's values are applicable in world situations. Minority groups such as traveller families are very well supported by the school and they have a positive attitude towards school. The school curriculum is rich and varied. Children are excited by learning about other faiths. They are able to make links with Christianity such as bar mitzvah and confirmation. Staff feed positive attitudes to children. Children are very articulate about the Bible. In a Year 2 lesson on St Francis, cross curricular links were made with geography and the school values of endurance and compassion were identified by the children. The congregation support school/church activity days by leading groups of children in such activities as bell ringing and brass rubbing. One of these days was about life events; baptism, marriage and death. This is helping to augment the teaching of RE. Major Christian festivals are celebrated in church and these are very well supported by parents. Some parents now attend church regularly because of the church involvement in the school. The school environment provides lots of opportunities for prayer and reflection. Each classroom has a reflection area. Reflection books are used to capture children's thoughts, comments on life and experiences and where appropriate these are related to the Christian values. Some classrooms have a 'Wonder Wall' where children have been encouraged to ask 'big questions'. The indoor environment provides amazing opportunities for prayer and reflection however the playground has yet to be developed, though there are plans at an embryonic stage. Relationships between staff, children and their families are mutually supportive. The behaviour of children is excellent as a result of positive, affirming relationships between pupils and staff.

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

There is a daily act of collective worship which is distinctly Christian and is at the centre of school life. Worship takes place in both school and church and occasionally outdoors, such as on Ascension day. Attention is drawn to beauty and developing a sense of awe and wonder through music, art and consideration of the natural world. Worship is made very relevant and challenging to the children. Worship leaders and visitors from various Christian traditions make sure that there is a variety of styles of worship and that pupils are able to see the impact that faith can have on people's lives. Observed worship was based on the theme of remembrance. A pebble was used as a link to the story of David and Goliath. This was acted out by play figures and linked to the school's value of endurance. Pupils were engaged and responsive. One weekly act of worship explores global issues, linking them to Christian principles and the school's values. The theology of the trinity is taught particularly at Pentecost but this needs to be discussed during worship regularly in order to embed greater understanding. All members of staff lead worship as well as the vicar, curate and two members of the church. This gives a cohesive approach to worship by both church and school. It also means that children have regular and frequent contact with members of the parish church. Pupils lead worship, they particularly enjoy leading prayers and being involved in drama. They also play percussion instruments and on occasion children's poems are read as part of worship. This helps pupils to feel valued for their contributions. Worship is relaxed and confident and it is evident that there is mutual respect for one another. Pupils are familiar with Anglican liturgy through shared responses and traditional prayers such as 'The Lord's Prayer'. Children are introduced to teaching about the Eucharist and there are sometimes activities which involve the sharing of bread. Collective worship provides excellent opportunities for children to consider things beyond themselves. Interactive displays help children to reflect further and develop a deeper understanding. For example a Lego display based on the Syrian war helped children to consider which school values were applicable to different aspects of the situation. Children learn about Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith through special event days, such as a day which focused on Christian traditions at Christmas in Poland.

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

Since the last SIAS inspection the headteacher, staff, governors and church have developed a shared vision for the school based on the school's Christian values. This has radically changed the culture of the school and affected the lives of children and others in the school community for the better. It has meant that the Christian values of the school are now very explicit and firmly embedded into the daily life of the school. The impact of these values has been regularly monitored and evaluated and because of this the school has moved significantly forward. The school has therefore acted on all areas to improve from the last report. The staff work very much as a team to provide both academic and emotional support for children and families. Pupil achievement is high as every effort is made to support and challenge pupils of all abilities and needs. The school is very successful at closing the gap for pupil premium children. Achievement is viewed in terms of the whole child. Art, music, sport and spirituality are considered to be the key to engaging children in the more academic areas of the curriculum. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The RE leader supports staff both in the school and in other schools through the Tenterden Rural Alliance. The work of the church and school are interwoven and it is difficult to know where one ends and the other begins. The vicar is a school governor and regularly meets with the head to pray for the needs of the school. The school participates in the church carol service and contributes monthly to the parish magazine. Efforts are made to work with the local community to promote social cohesion, community spirit and maintain a strong Christian presence in the village. Church and community groups are made welcome in school. Recent projects include a sewing project with older members of congregation and a tea party for elderly people, thus strengthening ties within the community and helping children to value older people. Children contribute to Canterbury Cathedral days and this helps children to understand the importance of the national church. Worship is regularly monitored and evaluated to good effect, such as the improved use of music.

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