



**St Mary's CE Primary School,
Horsham**

Diocese of Chichester

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report



Date of inspection:	17 October 2012
Name of inspector:	Hilary Ferries
NS inspector's number:	276
School address:	Normandy Horsham West Sussex RH12 1JL
Unique reference number:	126029
Status:	Voluntary Aided
Number on roll:	208
Age range of pupils:	5-11
LA:	West Sussex
Name of chair of governors:	Rachael Stoffell
Name of headteacher:	Shelley Dutson
Date of previous inspection:	October 2007

The inspection of denominational education and collective worship in the school was carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Description of the school

St Mary's is a one form entry primary school near the centre of Horsham. Pupils come from across the town and further afield and the school is oversubscribed. The majority of pupils are from a white British background. There has been recent building work to enhance the school environment.

Summary judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's CE Primary School, Horsham as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The Christian mission 'Be the best I can in the love of Christ' underpins all that the school does and makes a significant difference to the very strong relationships between all involved with the school. Worship and prayer are central to the life of the school. Religious Education makes a strong contribution to the school's Christian mission. Leadership at all levels continually strive for further improvement of the school as a Church school.

Grade: 1

Established strengths

- Positive relationships and a strong staff team who work together well to make the school successful as a Church school
- The centrality of worship and the excellent links with the parish churches
- Clear Christian vision and ethos and a commitment to continual improvement from all the school leadership, governors and clergy
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Focus for development

- Formalise the way that Religious Education (RE) data is presented to governors to inform a whole school picture of standards and identify future progress
- Embed the work on global citizenship

The school meets the statutory requirement for Collective Worship	Yes
The school meets the statutory requirement for Religious Education	Yes

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

Christian values are central to the school and underpin all policies. This is seen in the very positive relationships and the way that everyone works together. Pupils say that they feel valued and special. This is reflected in pupil surveys which show that 90% of them feel safe and that a grown up will help them if they are in difficulty. Members of the school council feel that their voices are heard and that they make a difference to school life. One example of this is their request for a quiet area which has led to the development of the outside reflection area. One pupil said, 'The reflection area is a quiet place for peace if I'm feeling like I need to think about things'.

Opportunities for Spiritual, Moral and Social development are outstanding. The reflection areas in classrooms are used for prayer and quiet time. There is evidence of big and puzzling questions woven through the curriculum and the Godly Play sessions each term further develop opportunities for wondering. The Olympic values theme developed pupils' understanding and respect and linked them to the Christian values of the school. Behaviour is excellent because there are clear guidelines, based on forgiveness, reconciliation, rights and responsibilities which are understood by all. The school has rightly identified cultural development as a priority and is developing this both through the curriculum where resources used celebrate diversity and through focus weeks which have improved pupils' awareness. There are also developing links with a school in Sierra Leone and with a local town.

Pupils say they like their teachers who are 'great, make learning fun and always ready to help'. This is reflected in the high standards and progress the school achieves for all groups of pupils.

Grade: 1

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is outstanding.

Pupils speak very positively about Collective Worship which holds a central place in school life. They welcome the wealth of input from clergy across five different churches which gives pupils a good understanding of a range of Anglican tradition. Collective Worship is very well planned and the three year programme of themes enhances their learning. The school has addressed the issue from the last inspection and carried out systematic evaluation of worship. This has led to changes such as increased pupil participation which has strengthened the impact of worship further. This was seen in the Harvest Service observed during the inspection where there was a high level of pupil engagement as a result of the revised Eucharist liturgy. The half termly services in church, well attended by parents and carers who are supportive of worship in the school. Music is an important part of worship and contributes well. The singing was enthusiastic and staff accompanied a song written by a member of the clergy team. One pupil said, 'when we sing it makes me feel happy and feels like I'm talking to God'.

Prayer is important in the life of the school. One pupil said, 'we always find time for prayer'. Pupils can put their prayers in the prayer box and these are offered up in worship at school and by the active parent prayer group. This group meets regularly to pray and also to support the school in 'faith through action' which shows pupils the application of faith to life.

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of Religious Education is outstanding.

Standards and achievement in RE are above national expectations. This is because of the excellent teaching throughout the school which includes feedback to pupils and detailed tracking of their progress. Accurate moderation of work enables teachers to be secure in their assessment of progress.

One pupil said, 'teachers tell you how you have done and tell you what to do to improve'. The scheme of work has recently been revised and the new two year programme is proving successful, with more active learning. The clergy team contribute well to RE, both in delivering aspects of the RE curriculum, such as Baptism and in their role on the Worship Committee. Lessons are well planned and regular observations from the leadership team show that teaching is consistently good and often outstanding.

Pupils are very positive about RE. Learning about different religions is an important part of the syllabus: pupils interviewed talked of the need to respect those of faith and of none. One pupil said, 'People believe different things and respect each other'. Key Stage One pupils were looking forward to their visit to the synagogue and in Year 6 there was effective use of resources to enhance learning. A high level of reflection and thinking was shown as pupils learned from religion, particularly in Key Stage Two in discussions about faith through art. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is very strong.

Grade: 1

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

The headteacher and governors have a strong Christian vision for the school. In 2011 all members of the school community were involved in a review of the vision, which is clearly articulated by all, making the Christian ethos central to the school and informing all strategic decisions. The Worship Committee effectively reviews every aspect of the school as a Church school on a rolling programme. Actions for development are clearly identified and included in the school improvement plan.

The RE subject leader monitors the subject well and reports to the link governor who feeds back to the governing body. At the moment there is no 'big picture' of whole school standards and progress in RE which means the governors do not have detail to challenge and support the school as effectively as they might.

The school has considered the importance of succession planning and aims to develop all staff. The development of the middle leaders and reviewing the different aspects of the teaching and learning of RE are contributing to the high standards and good progress. The governing body also has strong systems in place. The newly elected chair of governors has been shadowing for two years and is confident in her role. She has an ambition for the school to continue to develop, a feature shared by the leadership of the school, governors and clergy.

Relationships with parents and carers are very positive and they are consulted and involved in decision making. In a recent parent survey one parent wrote: 'I think religion is a key element in the school and that it is everywhere'. There are very close links between the parish churches, clergy and the school and a real sense of a Christian community.

Grade: 1