



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Stonehouse Road  
Hadleigh  
Ipswich  
IP7 5BH

**Diocese: St Edmundsbury and Ipswich**

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 12 December 2011

Date of last inspection: 16 March 2009

School's unique reference number: 124760

Headteacher: Andrew Frolish

Inspector's name and number: Marion Betts 220

#### School context

St Mary's School is a smaller than average primary school with part-time nursery provision for children aged 3 to 11 years. There are 170 pupils on roll. The school serves a residential area in the town of Hadleigh. Almost all pupils are white British. The older pupils are taught in a mixed-age class. The school runs a Breakfast club. The school is situated a short walk from the church.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's school as a Church of England school are good

The Christian foundation is prominently featured around the school and firmly embedded in all the school's activities. Explicitly Christian values are at the heart of the school's community life and have a strong positive influence on the behaviour, attitudes and well-being of the pupils. The school's close link with the local church is recognised by pupils and parents as a distinctive feature of the school.

#### Established strengths

- Overt Christian values promoted, demonstrated and praised by all in the school community
- The very effective leadership of the headteacher in promoting the Christian vision of the school.
- The positive attitudes and enjoyment of pupils to collective worship.
- The use of pupils' own ideas and opinions to deepen their Religious Education (RE) thinking.

#### Focus for development

- Undertake the planned monitoring and review of all aspects of RE teaching and learning.
- Formalise RE assessment procedures so that progress of learning can be determined and enhanced
- Undertake the planned development of a "spiritual garden" for pupils to use for quiet reflection so enhancing their spiritual development

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

Pupils are proud of their school, praising the care of the teachers who listen to them and make learning fun. Pupils enjoy their school life and appreciate being part of a community where everyone is known and valued. They understand and endeavour to live the Christian values that they learn about in worship and RE. They enjoy the school system where anyone can give a praise award for recognition of a Christian value demonstrated by another. These are celebrated in the classroom and displayed on the wall.

Relationships and respect between pupils and staff are very good and demonstrate the school's Christian context. The school is characterised by praise used effectively and a sense of a positive well-being. Parents appreciate the care given to their children whose individual needs are known and provided for.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is very good. Pupils behave well and have many opportunities to discuss their views and listen to others. They feel special when their ideas are used by the school. They have a clear understanding of their responsibility to care for the environment, exemplified by their participation in developing the school grounds. Pupils enthusiastically undertake other responsibilities such as caring for younger pupils for example as buddies. They have a strong concern for the needs of others shown by the child-led fundraising activities such as organising the provision of "Shelter Boxes" for refugees.

The spiritual development of pupils is enhanced well by attractive displays around school and attendance at embroidery and art exhibitions in the local churches. There are plans to provide an additional garden as a focus for spiritual reflection.

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

Collective worship plays a central part in the school's life and is understood by pupils and staff to be an important time for affirming the school's Christian foundation and values and developing a sense of community. Pupils listen attentively and willingly answer questions. They appreciate the time given to reflect on the message and its application to their lives. They say "it helps you grow and makes you think". Worship observed with younger children concentrated on what values they had seen in action that day. Through its Christian context and values promotion worship makes a powerful contribution to defining pupils' attitudes and behaviours.

Pupils enjoy worship and have opportunities to plan their own class assemblies and write and use their own prayers. The worship is enriched through a wide range of Christian visitors including from St Mary's church and other local Christian churches; and also through different worship groupings, for example pupils enjoy their discussions within class groups.

Worship is linked to the main Christian festivals and seasons, an example being the use of the advent ring at this time. Regular worship elements include gathering and dismissal responses, an attractive focus story, often from the Bible, a time for reflection, prayers and enthusiastic singing. This in addition to the significant input from the Dean develops pupils' understanding of Anglican practices. Twice a year each class joins a church communion service and has the opportunity to talk to the worshipping community. Main festival services are held in church and parents and parishioners invited. More formal worship evaluations are planned and all stakeholders will have an input.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

RE is an important subject demonstrated by well planned lessons, attractive displays and the input from Christian visitors. The majority of pupils enjoy RE especially when visual presentations are used, and the outcomes are practical or oral. Links with Christian values are made such as when younger pupils suggested what non-physical gifts could fill a baby's empty present box with such as love and kindness.

Pupils achieve well and have a good understanding of the Christian faith and knowledge of other faiths. Teaching of RE throughout the school is good and incorporates well both attainment targets. An example of this was pupils using their own contributions of religious and non-religious symbols to express what Christmas means to them. RE is linked creatively to other areas of the curriculum especially literacy, poetry, speaking and listening, drama, art and ICT (Information and Communication Technology).

RE makes a good contribution to pupils' personal, moral and social development. Teachers effectively provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on challenging questions raised during learning which cause them to think more deeply and share their thoughts, opinions and feelings. RE contributes well to pupils' knowledge of their local environment and a variety of Christian places of worship and also the clergy are used as resources for RE learning. Formal assessment of RE work is not at present undertaken. The school has identified the need for the new RE subject leader to co-ordinate an RE review which will include monitoring all aspects and evaluations by all stakeholders.

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

The headteacher is instrumental in promoting the Christian vision of the school which underlies all school activities. Staff are strongly committed to implementing this Christian ethos and personally set the tone of Christian values of care and concern for others. Staff feel appreciated for their work by the school leadership and are very supportive of each other. They are able to access a Christian counselling service if needed.

The governors actively support the Christian vision and have undertaken a monitoring visit to evaluate the school as a church school. The Christian foundation of the school is made explicit through prominent displays and all communications. The current Christian value being promoted is shared with parents.

Links with parents are outstanding and this represents excellent improvement since the last inspection. Parents appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and all staff to listen to and act on their concerns. Pupils feel very involved in school decision-making through the school council and Eco group and appreciate their opinions being asked.

Pupils and parents are very aware of the strong link between the church and the school. The dean visits regularly. The pupils support church events by visiting their exhibitions such as that of creation embroidery and by the displays of their work there. The school welcomes the church congregation to its special services. The school is pro-active within its local community for example the older children visit a residential home, have sung at the town's "Lighting Up" ceremony and the school had a stall at this year's Hadleigh show.