



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Farncombe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School

Grays Road  
Farncombe  
Godalming  
Surrey GU7 3LT

**Previous SIAS grade: Good**

**Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Guildford**

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: 10 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 25 May 2010

School's unique reference number: 125145

Headteacher: Andrea Simonsson

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

#### School context

Farncombe is a smaller than average size infant school with 118 children on role. There are a further 22 children in the nursery class. Most children are of white British heritage and from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The number entitled to the pupil premium is below the national average. Attendance is in line with national expectations.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Farncombe as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The pupils live out the Christian ethos through the many opportunities that encourage them to be inspired, imaginative and individual.
- The high quality outdoor environment provides pupils with the space to have time to be still and reflect.
- The commitment of leaders and managers to the promotion of the Christian ethos in putting pupils at the centre of all aspects of the life of the school.

#### Areas to improve

Enable pupils to develop an appreciation and understanding of the connections between the school's Christian ethos, their wellbeing and learning by:

- Extending opportunities across the curriculum for the greater development of a spiritual dimension to deepen understanding and appreciation of learning.
- Providing greater opportunities for pupils to discuss their thoughts and ideas about matters of faith and belief and questions of meaning and purpose.

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

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection in strengthening the impact of Christian values by making them more explicit in the life of the school. The identification of six core values has provided the opportunity to explore them in greater depth through acts of worship and in the classroom. Four of the six have so far been explored and pupils talk with confidence about trust, compassion and hope. They know that these values are 'special' because they are part of being a church school and helping them to be better young people. These values are increasingly being applied as an integral part of the pupils' learning and are making a significant contribution to a distinctively Christian approach to the delivery of the curriculum. For example, one class chose to use favourite Bible stories to create a survey as part of their work on data in maths. An outstanding aspect of the pupils' academic success is the contribution of the Christian ethos to their learning. Inspiration, imagination and individuality comprise the school vision and these three attributes are central to everyday teaching and learning. For example, religious education (RE) strongly promotes the use of imagination to encourage pupils to respond creatively and be inspired by what they learn and to create work that reflects an individual interpretation of their thoughts and ideas. Pupils respond with excitement and enthusiasm to these opportunities and show a willingness to engage with each other and share ideas. There is a spiritual dimension as they place a strong emphasis on reflection. The depth of appreciation of the connections between the ethos, Christian values, spirituality and the impact they make on wellbeing and learning has, however, not yet been fully explored. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Adults and pupils treat each other with respect and care. The outside environment in particular provides quality space to be still and calm in well-maintained gardens. Pupils value these spaces and say how much they enjoy the time just to sit and be still or to say a prayer. The school makes a concerted effort to help pupils develop their understanding and appreciation of a range of cultures and different faiths. They speak respectfully about other religions and explain the importance of learning about them so that they can better understand life in Britain and abroad.

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

Collective worship is vibrant and transformational. It is firmly rooted in Christian teaching, Bible stories and Anglican tradition and practice, whilst at the same time, being fully inclusive of all faiths and respectful of those who choose not to have religious beliefs. Themes based on the six core values have a direct and discernible impact on behaviour, attitudes and relationships. For example, pupils reflecting on their worship, describe how 'being trusting gives you the chance to be a better person'. They apply the messages they hear in acts of worship to their own lives both in school and at home. Good links between Christian values and social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) strengthens the impact of worship on personal development and makes a valuable contribution to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development. The impact of this is evident in the way they respond to events such as the Nepal earthquake. Pupils have an excellent understanding of prayer which is an integral part of school life. They express views eloquently whilst being respectful of the views of others, describing prayer as a 'time to think about everything you have, to be thankful and to talk to your God'. An understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is developing and pupils share their understanding of the nature of this with confidence. Participation in worship is meaningful. They regularly lead worship by retelling stories or acting out scenes from Bible stories. Involvement in leading acts of worship gives them a real sense of being at the heart of the purpose of the life of the school as a church school. The headteacher and governors monitor and evaluate worship each term. The recent review of worship planning resulted in a more flexible approach that allows for a more spontaneous response to events in the life of the school or further afield. Pupils have a good understanding of major Christian festivals such as Easter, harvest and Christmas and view them as integral aspects of the life of the school.

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

Very good progress has been made since the last inspection by adding depth to its understanding of how the Christian ethos is lived out through inspiration, imagination and individuality. Leaders articulate the Christian vision with insight and ensure that the pupils' learning and personal development are shaped by values and attributes that have their roots in Bible teaching. The headteacher is committed to the continual development of the Christian character and is fully supported in this by staff and governors. Parents say that the Christian ethos is 'woven through' the life of the school and that looking at values through a Christian perspective gives their children 'a different way of understanding the world'. Leadership and management have robust procedures in place that monitor and evaluate the impact of the Christian ethos. Governors have a secure grasp of the school's strength as a church school and the areas in which it can continue to improve. Leadership has successfully addressed the areas for development from the previous report with the greater emphasis that prayer now has in the life of the school. Regular opportunities for continuing professional development ensure that staff are kept up to date with latest developments in aspects of church school provision such as RE and contributing to self-evaluation. Links with the parish church are strong. Pupils and adults in school regard the church as an integral part of the life of the school. The celebration of major Christian festivals in church and the pupils' involvement in some family services are good examples of the mutual links between the two communities. The vicar is well known in the school community and regularly leads acts of worship. The popular 'Church Club', run by church members, is a further example of the commitment by the local church.

The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report July 2015 Farncombe CE VC Primary School Godalming GU7 3LT