



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### St Michael and All Angels Church of England Infant School

High Street  
Lyndhurst  
Hampshire  
SO43 7BB

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Winchester**

Local authority: Hampshire

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Date of last inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011

School's unique reference number: 116366

Headteacher: Tina Daniel

Inspector's name and number: Lorraine Pugh 819

#### School context

St. Michael and All Angels Church of England Infant School is smaller than average with 84 pupils on roll. It serves the New Forest village of Lyndhurst and its surrounding area. Pupils are mainly of white British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for the government pupil premium grant and identified special educational needs are below average. Pupil attainment at the end of key stage one is higher than average. It is one of the three infant schools forming The Oaks Church of England Learning Federation. The school has a Head of Learning overseeing its daily management. The federation is led by an Executive Headteacher, with a single governing body.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Michael and All Angels Infant School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Christian values underpin all aspects of school life and they have a significant impact on the school's approach to relationships, pupil well being and attitudes towards learning.
- Collective worship provides a vital role in providing pupils with an important time for stillness, prayer and reflection.
- The school's leadership and management ensures that its Christian ethos has a high profile which develops as an integral part of overall school development planning.

#### Areas to improve

- To develop the pupils' role in the development, organisation and leading of daily worship.
- Increased opportunities for pupils to have first hand experiences with other faiths and cultures.
- Improved communication with parents regarding the curriculum and teaching of RE, including opportunities for them to be involved in activities.

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

Distinctively Christian core values are an established strength and they clearly reflect St. Michael and All Angels' firm identity as a church school. These Christian values are clearly expressed to pupils in ways that they understand. Friendship, openness, responsibility, endurance, stewardship and trust are known to the school's adults and pupils as 'FOREST' values. Vibrant displays with clear Biblical references ensure that the Christian roots underpinning each value are made explicit. This is reinforced through the school's website and regular newsletters, giving the Christian ethos of the school added meaning and purpose. This is what makes St. Michael and All Angels an outstanding Church school. Values are integrated into the life of the school in ways that impact positively on pupils' personal wellbeing and learning attitudes. This has resulted in academic attainment consistently exceeding national expectations. The school has a strong determination that all pupils will succeed and make progress, whatever their starting points. The school's nurturing ethos ensures that, when needed, pupils and their families are sensitively supported both emotionally and academically. Pupils clearly articulate how Christian values support their relationships and behaviour. Parents have very positive views of the school, explaining that any issues or concerns are speedily resolved with openness and excellent communication. They trust the school to always do its best for their children. They value the school's innovative approach to learning, for example, the successful Children's University where pupils earn credits for learning with their parents outside of the school day. Religious festivals are celebrated through the Christian year and pupils, as a result of their active participation, are able to explain their meaning. The strong working relationship between the church and school allows pupils to view the church as an extension of the school building with visiting clergy as part of the teaching team. The successful federation of the three schools has allowed the sharing of expertise within the school's belief that, 'we grow stronger by learning together with support and challenge.' Pupils know that they are part of a multi-faith world and are able to talk about their learning of other faiths and cultures. They are able to explain that people have different ways of showing their beliefs and that this should be respected. Charity fundraising is developing pupils' sense of responsibility to others and pupils are actively involved in choosing which charities to support. Pupils explain how they use the school's reflective spaces and how this helps them spiritually and emotionally. The school's nurturing and compassionate atmosphere provides a happy, caring and calm Christian learning environment with mutual respect clearly evident throughout the whole school community.

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

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Pupil feedback confirms their enjoyment of worship as a special part of the school day. Parents appreciate the opportunities to attend worship services within school and the Family Services held in the church. Pupils look forward to worship and they especially enjoy times when they can actively participate. Class Worship is well organised with planned themes and activities closely matched to the ages of the pupils in the class. Pupils say they feel proud when their behaviour is praised for demonstrating one or more of the FOREST values. Worship themes are planned carefully and are appropriate to the ages of the pupils. Themes are linked to Christian festivals and the school's values. Pupils participate enthusiastically through their singing and prayers and the school is aware that they could play an even greater role in worship organisation. Worship's impact is monitored and evaluated by the Christian Ethos committee, with outcomes informing future planning and provision. Regular visitors ensure that pupils gain rich experiences that capture their attention and interest. The Vicar works in partnership with the school and he plays a significant role in organising and leading worship. Pupils enjoy listening to Bible stories and are able to show their understanding by explaining the lessons within them. Younger pupils have Bible themed 'Worship Baskets' that encourage understanding through child initiated play. Jesus, and his central position within Christianity is made explicit and Anglican traditions are used with pupils understanding their meaning. For example, the children know that the lighted candle symbolises the Holy Spirit with their prayers rising into the presence of God. Pupils understand God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit at a level appropriate to their age because the adults leading worship make sure that language is simple and within their understanding. Adults in the school have a shared

understanding of spirituality and pupils' spiritual growth is being developed through planned curriculum activities and incidental opportunities across the school's environment. Personal prayer and reflection are used in worship as well as other places in the school, for example, the Prayer Tree and special worship areas in each classroom. Pupils say that they like writing prayers for themselves and for others. All statutory requirements for collective worship are met.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.**

Standards of attainment in Religious Education (RE) exceed national expectations for the majority of children and compare favourably with other core subjects. Significant numbers of pupils achieve high levels and this represents good progress from their starting points. Pupils are developing a very good understanding of Christianity and a growing knowledge of other world religions. This is reflected in their ability, at this young age, to identify some similarities between different religious beliefs. The school is aware of the need to increase the number of opportunities for pupils to have first hand experiences with other faiths and cultures. Religious Education (RE) teaching is highly effective in challenging pupil thinking. Pupils are excited, confident and highly engaged with their learning and keen to share their ideas with others in the class. They are able to appreciate how our Christian faith underpins values and how they influence simple moral choices. They are encouraged to explore concepts through appropriate activities for their age. Teaching is 'Concept/Big Idea' led and this builds on children's understanding of belief, making them aware that there are often many answers to a question. Pupil responses are recorded by teaching staff, and used very effectively to supplement formal assessment so that there is a secure grasp of each child's attainment. Teachers are supported with good quality resources and appropriate professional development. Professional liaison across the three federation schools ensures standards are monitored. RE makes an excellent contribution to the promotion of the Christian ethos through the opportunities given to pupils to extend their learning by exploring moral and social issues. These are strongly linked to the school's core Christian values. The effective leadership of RE means that there is a consistency of approach to its teaching and the regular cycle of monitoring and evaluation informs future development actions accurately.

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

The Headteacher is passionate that the school places its Christian ethos at the heart of its vision. Her close working with the Head of Learning ensures the school's distinctively Christian character has a high profile to all members of the school community. The school has established a very successful partnership with the other two church schools in the Oaks Federation. Each school has its own identity within a shared Christian vision. Strong working relationships with the Diocese and other local schools ensure that staff and governors benefit from personal, professional and spiritual development. This supports their understanding of what it means to be a Christian school and strongly influences the school's future development. Formal monitoring and evaluation by the school's Ethos committee contributes significantly to the school's effectiveness as a Church school. The school community values and benefits from its close partnership with the local church, with school staff viewing the church as 'another classroom'. This enriches the high quality RE and worship provision within the school. Leaders ensure that RE and Collective worship impact on Christian development by ensuring they have strong links to the core Christian values of the school. Parents say the school gives their children opportunities to encounter faith in ways that promote understanding and engagement, however, they would welcome more information regarding the RE curriculum. The vicar is a regular visitor and very active member of the governing body's Ethos committee. The strong partnership between the church and school enhances pupils' sense of belonging to the church and their understanding of Christian belief. The school's commitment to its Christian values, and what this means, forms part of the induction process for new staff. Following the last inspection, the school leadership has been successful in addressing the areas for development. The school is very well placed to continue to develop as a church school because it has strong foundations upon which to build. The commitment from the church and school communities gives the necessary impetus to drive developments through. All statutory arrangements for RE and collective worship have been met.

