



St Mary the Virgin CE Primary School, Hartfield

Diocese of Chichester

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report



Date of inspection:	10 May 2012
Name of inspector:	Pat Lock
NS inspector's number:	194
School address:	High Street Hartfield East Sussex TN7 4AA
Unique reference number:	114553
Status:	Voluntary Aided
Number on roll:	110
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
LA:	East Sussex
Name of chair of governors:	David Ball
Name of headteacher:	Andrea McGlew
Date of previous inspection:	25 September 2008

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 smaller than average primary school in the Ashdown Forest, which serves the village of Hartfield, but also draws pupils from further afield. There are 110 pupils taught in 5 classes. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and there is little ethnic diversity. The school is an integral part of both the village community and St Mary the Virgin church. The well appointed building includes a newly refurbished library and an outdoor play area for the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils. The current headteacher was appointed from Easter 2012 and has therefore been in post for only a few weeks.

Summary judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary the Virgin CE Primary School, Hartfield as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

St Mary's is a satisfactory church school. A clear Christian ethos permeates the school and there is a positive nurturing environment in which the pupils flourish. There is a strong sense of belonging to both the village community and the church. Parents are very supportive of the school and share in many aspects of its daily life. The new headteacher already has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has identified areas for improvement.

Grade: 3

Established strengths

- The Christian ethos of the school that underpins and permeates the school day.
- The care, support and encouragement that is given to all pupils which enables them to be valued as individuals.
- The quality of relationships between pupils, staff, governors and the local community including the church that makes each pupil feel special and respected.

Focus for development

- To ensure that assessment for Religious Education (RE) is implemented throughout the school .
- To ensure that teaching and learning in RE is monitored and evaluated effectively.
- To implement an effective system of evaluation of Collective Worship with all stakeholders.

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 good at meeting the needs of all its learners.

Pupils, parents and governors spoke highly of the supportive, friendly environment that permeates the school and enables pupils to develop in all aspects of their learning and well-being. Positive relationships between all members of the school community reflect the strong Christian values that underpin the school day. A parent stated that the teachers treat the children as if they were their own and that many parents choose the school because of its Christian values. All members of the school community are aware of the Christian ethos through its Mission Statement, aims and policies.

The School Council were proud of their role and responsibility and spoke of how they contribute to supporting others in need by fund raising such as a table top sale, Sports Relief and Red Nose Day. Pupils across the age range enjoy school and feel safe. They are aware of what to do in instances of bullying, illness or dealing with any concerns they may have. Behaviour is good in lessons and at playtimes with clear guidelines and expectations, based on a Christian foundation of forgiveness and putting right.

The environment contributes well to the spiritual development of pupils and each class has its own reflection corner which includes Christian symbols. Pupils spoke of using these corners to be still and quiet and to talk to God. A parent spoke of her child saying "God is my best friend" after reading a class book. The display at the main entrance reflects the Christian foundation of the school and includes a beautiful Noah's Ark banner and a prayer box which is used regularly by the pupils. The school, church and village work together to support each other at events, for example, Harvest gifts are distributed in the village. A global link is made through "Starfish Malawi" for an African school, enabling pupils to communicate with and raise funds for pupils in Kajendere.

Grade: 2

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

Collective worship is an important part of the school day and is inclusive, with a regular pattern of worship throughout the week. The Rector leads worship in the church building, adjacent to the school, once a week. Pupils spoke of the "wow" activities and fun that they have in church and many attend Sunday "Kidz Praise" services. The pupils respond well in worship and there are opportunities for participation. They enjoy singing and listening to music. In the worship observed during the inspection pupils were encouraged to reflect on the story and to consider the question "What would Jesus do?" Pupils have written prayers and these were being used in some classes for Grace at lunchtime or prayers during the day.

Planning for Collective Worship, currently based on Values for Life, also incorporates some of the Anglican cycle such as Saints days. Pupils have some knowledge of Anglican practice which is followed in the weekly church service and also experienced in school, for example, a candle was lit at the beginning of worship, with the response "Jesus, the Light of the World" . Weekly themes are displayed and followed up in other curriculum areas There are some positive aspects of worship, especially the involvement of parents at church worship.

At the current time there is no system of evaluation in place to shape future planning and identify areas for improvement. Learners have not been consulted although pupils spoken to were eager to share their own ideas to improve Collective Worship. As this was a focus for development on the previous inspection this now needs to be addressed with urgency so that all stakeholders, including staff, parents and governors are fully informed but are also able to contribute to this important aspect of church school life.

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of Religious Education is satisfactory.

RE is based on the East Sussex Agreed Syllabus. Pupils enjoy their lessons which are creative and show thinking "outside of the box". They spoke of a how a recent RE project through art helped them to understand the Psalms and to feel the different moods of the writer. The RE co-ordinator who is part-time, teaches most of the lessons across the school. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least good including clear learning objectives, success criteria and a time of reflection. In the lessons observed during the inspection careful questioning of pupils covered a range of abilities and pupils finding Christian symbols in the church building were encouraged to find new symbols and think of a meaning for them. Pupils were enthusiastic in their lessons and reference was made throughout to the key teachings of Jesus and how this applies to our daily lives. Values, linked to the worship themes for the week were also emphasised. Pupils spoken to in KS2 enjoyed their lessons and one child said " RE teaches us how to be good Christians and respect everyone".

The majority of the RE curriculum time is spent on Christianity allowing for the teaching of another religion in all classes for at least one term in the school year, with more time being given in KS2. The school have recently introduced assessment for individual pupils but this has not yet completed a full year. They were therefore unable to demonstrate pupil progress. However, an effective system is now in place backed up by a portfolio of work and when fully implemented will be a good tool for future planning.

Monitoring of RE has not been a priority and therefore there is no evidence available to qualify the standards of teaching and learning in the school. However, the RE co-ordinator and the headteacher are fully aware of the need for development in these areas and they are fully competent to implement them within the School Improvement Plan.

Grade: 3

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

At the time of the inspection the leadership and management of the school was judged to be satisfactory. The headteacher has been in post for only a few weeks and there has been considerable change in the governing body in recent months, including a new Chair of Governors. However, as a leadership team they have the potential to take the school forward and there is a clear shared Christian vision, seen through the Mission Statement and Aims. The toolkit for self-evaluation was fully in place with a priority for revision with governors and staff. Both a parent governor and a foundation governor were fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and participated in the life of the school. They have a monitoring role and report back to the whole governing body, as do other governors. They have worked alongside staff in the writing of policies such as Collective Worship and RE. The new Chair of Governors is attending appropriate Diocesan training and a recent self- evaluation training course for all governors has clarified their role and responsibilities as Church School governors. There is a link governor for each class and a named SEN and Safeguarding governor. However, the governing body did not ensure that key issues from the previous inspection report were addressed and implemented and this has had an impact on the school's standards as a church school and the effectiveness of leadership and management.

The headteacher has been able to identify areas for improvement and is clearly prioritising the needs of the school. She has both the knowledge and capability to raise the standards in the school by developing leadership at all levels, including subject co-ordinators. There are very good relationships between staff, governors and parents and I am confident that the current leadership have the capacity for improvement across all aspects of school life, including the distinctiveness as a church school.

Grade: 3