



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



 The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Mawnan Church of England VA Primary School

Shute Hill, Mawnan Smith
Falmouth
TR11 5HQ

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Truro

Local authority: Cornwall

Dates of inspection: 9 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 30 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 112002

Headteacher: Randall Brook

Inspector's name and number: Penny Burnside 772

School context

Mawnan VA is a smaller than average-sized primary school with 114 pupils on roll. It serves the community of Mawnan parish. About one third of the children come from out of the catchment area, mainly from Falmouth. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class with some pupils from Year 1. All other classes contain pupils from two year-groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is just below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mawnan as a Church of England school are good

- The vision and commitment of the headteacher and governors ensure that the school fulfils its mission of 'learning and playing in faith together'
- A deep understanding of Christian service underpins much of the school's work and makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual development
- Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school

Areas to improve

- Refresh the school's approach to recording in religious education (RE) so that it more accurately reflects the good teaching and learning evident in lessons and shows pupils how to improve their work
- Ensure that action-planning for RE involves all staff and takes into account all the evidence available from monitoring, so that priorities for improvement are clearly identified and implemented effectively and consistently
- Develop and extend the existing systems for planning worship in order to involve more staff and pupils in planning as well as leading
- Strengthen the existing systems for pupils' evaluation of worship to include the collection of pupils' suggestions for improvement

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

Mawnan's Christian character is seen clearly in the daily life of the school and its explicitly Christian values make a positive difference to relationships and behaviour. Children understand the place of the school's values in the success of the school saying, 'They make you improve and try to do your best and that's what God wants.' Spirituality was the principal focus for improvement following the previous inspection and considerable work has been done in response, with the result of strengthening further the school's Christian character and enabling children to thrive both academically and spiritually. As a result standards have risen and are now above those nationally. A Christian understanding of service shapes the school's provision and this is lived out particularly vividly in its partnership with a school in Nepal. This relationship has been developed with a sensitive awareness of the rich opportunities for nurturing spirituality and as a result children respond thoughtfully in conversation and with prayers, sometimes referring to the Bible as they do so. Children have a growing understanding of Christianity as a world faith and this is enhanced through the school's commitment to looking outwards and praying for the world. The school environment, with high quality displays, including a cross designed by pupils in partnership with an artist, supports their understanding of the Christian character of the school. As one child said, 'Seeing crosses makes us feel that God is still around us in everything we do.' An after-school 'Footprints' club develops this still further. A recent initiative, the 'What if' project, has begun to shape some lesson planning and pupils' thinking, for example, by encouraging them to marvel at the sense of order and predictability in God's world during a lesson on algebra. The school's Christian character shapes the school's approach to tackling issues of attendance and its response is driven by compassion and understanding. RE makes a positive contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of Mawnan School. The school's strapline, 'Learning and Playing in Faith Together,' displayed prominently in the hall, is lived-out especially vibrantly when the school community comes together to worship. A striking feature of worship is the very high level of involvement of children and, in particular, of musicians who enhance the sung worship with skilled and sensitive playing. Those taking part say they 'feel important' or 'like the leader.' There is a strong sense of 'connectedness' between worship and the rest of the school day as themes talked about in worship are discussed in lessons and seen throughout the school environment in displays and in classroom books of prayers. Prayer is a significant feature of the school. Some of the youngest children are adamant that they can pray 'everywhere!' and they explain that Christians pray 'so God will be happy.' Older children describe prayer as 'like a natural thing to do' and they say that the school makes it easy for people to pray if they want to, because, 'it's a whole school that does it,' and 'your friends are joining in and no-one thinks it's silly.' All children, including the very youngest, are able to say the Lord's Prayer confidently and with meaning. A particularly interesting feature of worship in the school is the way in which an act of worship can incorporate structured elements, such as formal prayers or a rehearsed hymn, as well as space to respond appropriately to current events in the news, such as with extempore prayer or a child's spontaneous choice of a song. Children consequently see worship as dynamic and relevant, and are highly engaged. The incumbent, who leads worship fortnightly, ensures that children understand the Anglican nature of worship, for example through the school Eucharist. Visitors from other churches and an 'Open the Book' team help to enrich children's experience of worship. Pupils' understanding of Jesus is good and they have a developing understanding of the Trinity as a result of worship in school. Worship is strongly led by the headteacher. Opportunities for involving other staff and children in planning as well as leading are currently limited. There are plans in place to address this. Governors' monitoring is thorough. There are efficient systems for pupils to monitor worship by canvassing children's opinions and to record their responses

electronically. The school is aware that this needs further development to collect more qualitative data in order to plan for specific improvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Teaching of RE is confident and creative and as a result children respond enthusiastically and enjoy their learning. This was seen in an exciting session where the teacher adapted a lesson on prayer to allow the children to experience some extremely windy weather and skilfully reinforced their prior learning about the Holy Spirit and about God's power. Standards in RE are in line with national expectations, with some pupils achieving more highly. This is because teachers' well-targeted questioning leads to children being challenged to think deeply. In a lesson on the Last Supper, children studied the text of John's gospel and their responses showed deep understanding and an ability to apply what they already knew. When asked why Jesus spoke as he did, one child said, 'They're important words and it's the Last Supper so it's his last chance!' Pupils are eager to talk about their learning from other major faiths and they engage in mature conversations about things which they find surprising or puzzling. Throughout the RE lessons, children make spontaneous links to the school's Christian values, such as when a child commented that Jesus spoke to people 'respectfully.' Children's spiritual development is nurtured through high quality teaching about prayer. The involvement of the RE governor, in staff meetings, in working alongside the headteacher and in contributing to self-evaluation, is a strong feature. The quality of pupils' written work in books is not consistent across the school. Sometimes the written tasks set do not provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate what they really know and think, and marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work.

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

The Christian vision of the headteacher is unmistakeable, and his embodiment of this vision makes a positive impact on standards, the Christian character of the school and on the well-being of the whole school community. The school acted swiftly in tackling the development areas from the previous inspection and as a result, children, staff and governors are more confident in discussing and planning for spiritual development and in identifying and embedding core Christian values. The question, 'What can I give from my learning?' rather than, 'What can I get from my learning?' illustrates a key theme for the school, namely that of Christian service. In this too the headteacher leads by example, for example, taking part monthly with the school choir and pupils from the band in the local church services. Because of this, partnerships with the church and the village community are strong, and people speak of the encouragement of seeing 'a chancel full of children.' The incumbent works closely with the school. Relationships with other local churches and more widely across the deanery are good and enrich the experiences provided for pupils. The headteacher takes responsibility for leading RE and worship, along with a very committed and well-informed governor and this ensures that RE and worship are given a high priority. Effective induction processes for new staff ensure that the school's Christian vision is understood and constant dialogue and strong teamwork ensure that this is embedded. Additional training from the diocese and good links with the deanery enhance this further. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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