



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Sturry Church of England Primary School

Park View, Sturry, Canterbury  
CT2 0NR

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Canterbury**

Local authority: Kent

Date of inspection: 19 June 2015

Date of last inspection: June 2010

School's unique reference number: 138738

Headteacher: Rachael Howell

Inspector's name and number: Canon Linda Burton. NS462

### School context

Sturry Church of England School is a larger than average primary school, with 376 pupils on roll. Almost all are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average whilst the proportion with special educational needs is below it. The school converted to an academy in 2012 and is the sponsor academy for other schools in the Stour Academy Trust. The Trust's Chief Executive Officer was previously headteacher of the school. The current headteacher has been in post since shortly after the academy formed, having taught in the school for many years previously.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sturry Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values at the heart of school life shape and sustain achievement at every level.
- Outstanding care and support by the staff team for all the pupils, especially those experiencing any kind of difficulty, means that any potential barriers to their success are minimised.
- Collective worship, within the context of the Anglican tradition, plays a central role in the life of the school and enables all members of the school community to develop and grow spiritually.
- Standards of teaching and learning in RE are of a very high quality. RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian ethos of the school and to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.

### Areas to improve

- Explore opportunities for partnership with local faith groups to increase pupils' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.
- Develop curriculum initiatives with lower school groups to improve pupils' understanding of theological issues.

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

The school's Christian character underpins all of its policies and practices. Christian values of friendship, compassion, respect and truth are firmly embedded. Parents, pupils and staff appreciate being part of a happy, purposeful and thriving Christian community. The values are modelled in the quality of relationships, attitudes, behaviour and approaches to learning. Pupils across the whole age range articulate these values confidently. They are able to describe their roots in explicitly Christian, biblical teaching. They can explain how and why these values should impact on their own attitudes and behaviour. Pupil progress is excellent. Achievement at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is consistently above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs make excellent progress because staff provide carefully tailored programmes of work based on accurate assessments. Disadvantaged pupils achieve highly: achievement gaps have closed over time and are continuing to close. Attendance is above average and improving. Behaviour is exemplary and relationships between all community members are excellent. Pupils demonstrate great support and concern for each other's wellbeing and demonstrate high levels of responsibility. Pupil voice is strong and its impact on practice across the school is evident. Examples are the choice of explicit Christian values for the school, the Reflective Garden, and the award of stickers to their peers for the promotion of Christian values. The whole staff works unstintingly as a team to remove any potential barriers to success. Substantial support is given for any pupils who experience difficulties in their behaviour for learning. Forgiveness and the making of a fresh start lie at the heart of the school's philosophy. There are numerous opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the curriculum and pupils' understanding in this area is outstanding. One example of this is the link with St Laurent, Madagascar. The school supports many local and national charities such as Fields of Life. This enables pupils to develop their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. This could be extended further through links with representatives of other faiths locally. RE is a core subject and makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. Pupils are enthusiastic and confident about speaking about God and Jesus and the impact faith can have on life. Standards in teaching and learning are high. Monitoring and assessment procedures are robust and there is a good balance of challenging and engaging work across both attainment targets. The physical environment of the school is a rich resource. There are imaginative classroom based opportunities for reflection. High quality interactive displays around the school provide visual Christian stimulation and opportunities to reflect and engage with some of life's big questions and issues. The Reflective Garden is used extensively by individuals for prayer. It also provides an area where Buddies or School Council representatives can talk quietly with other pupils.

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

Collective worship is distinctively Christian and is at the heart of school life. It provides a central focus for each day when the presence of God is acknowledged and celebrated in an inclusive, engaging and inspirational occasion. It is greatly enjoyed by the whole school community. It is based on diocesan weekly themes and the planning cycle, skilfully constructed jointly by the school and the church. It includes biblical material linked to Christian values. There are services in church to mark major Christian festivals. The Trinity is a particular focus and is revisited regularly. Consequently, pupils are developing an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit appropriate for their age. Curriculum initiatives are being planned to further develop younger pupils' understanding of theological issues. A range of different worship leaders and visitors ensures that a rich variety of styles of worship occurs. Pupils are given opportunities to appreciate the impact worship can have on lives. They are very much at ease in taking

responsibility for acts of worship and participating in them in a meaningful way. The contribution of the 'Lighting the Candle' group to worship has developed considerably since the previous inspection. It serves to enrich the experience for the school community. The headteacher and a class led worship on the inspection day. Everyone was fully engaged in listening, singing and reflecting and revelled in opportunities to read, role play or offer their own prayers. Explicitly Anglican liturgy and traditions are clearly embedded in collective worship. All members of the school community are involved in the cycle of continuous improvement. The School Council monitors the choice of hymns in collective worship. This has led to the school's Christian Youth Worker introducing new worship songs which have greatly enhanced the quality of acts of worship. Prayer has significance in the life of the school. Opportunities are provided for prayer and reflection in each classroom, in the Reflective Garden, at the school Prayer Tree and at regular points in the school day. This aspect of the life of the school has impact on the wider community. Attendance at Messy Church has increased since it moved to the school. Weekly input in school from the Christian Youth Worker has resulted in more pupils from the school attending the Kidz Club, run by Churches Together.

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

The headteacher has a clear inclusive Christian vision for the school and brings considerable energy, purpose and commitment to the post. She leads a highly effective and committed senior leadership team within the school. She is supported by the Trust's very able RE and collective worship coordinator, its Principal and other senior staff. Governors and Board of Directors members fully embrace this vision. The headteacher and her team confidently articulate explicitly Christian values and make sure that they affect the lives of pupils and the school. This moral purpose drives the school's desire for excellence, for continuous personal development and for wholehearted support of vulnerable individuals and groups. The school's termly strategy report includes ongoing evaluation and improvement of the school's Christian character. Governors and Board of Directors members are able to use this to challenge while offering support. Major developments in the status and quality of RE and collective worship show the impact of the improvement cycle on the school's Christian character. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The provision of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has increased substantially since the previous inspection. The school's values permeate into the community. Community links are strong between the school and the village. Governors and parents attend weekly coffee mornings in school. Parents and carers delight in sharing worship weekly with their children. They report that their children talk at home about the school's values and they say that they are proud to bring their children to this school. The school plays a significant role in supporting other schools across the Academy Trust. It provides training and development opportunities across the Academy Trust, including preparing future leaders of church schools. It has a strong partnership with the local initial teacher training provider, acting as a hub for trainee teachers to experience best practice. The Diocese of Canterbury provides the school with ongoing valuable advice, training and support. The diocesan bishop is a regular visitor to the school.

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