

**St Peter's Methodist Primary School**

St. Peter's Grove,  
Canterbury,  
Kent

CT1 2DH,

**Diocese:** Canterbury

**Local authority:** Kent

**Dates of inspection:** 15<sup>th</sup> November 2012

**Date of last inspection:** 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2008

**School's unique reference number:** 118707

**Headteacher:** Mrs Carol Townsend

**Inspector's name and number:** Mrs Elizabeth Caudwell (639)

**School context**

This voluntary controlled Methodist school is located in Canterbury city centre. The majority of its 209 pupils are of White British origin. The proportions of pupils with English as an additional language and pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are both slightly above national average. Ofsted judged the school to be outstanding in May 2008.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter's as a Methodist Church Primary School are outstanding**

The Headteacher, staff and governors are fully committed to ensuring that a strong Christian ethos underpins the life of the school. As set out in the Mission Statement, each individual feels 'safe, valued and respected'.

**Established strengths**

- The Headteacher, governors and senior leaders demonstrate enthusiasm and dedication to the continued development of this Methodist school and have clearly identified priorities for improvement.
- Christian leadership characterised by effective team work ensures that all members of the school community feel welcome and included.
- Collective worship is at the heart of the school, engaging and nurturing spirituality in all its members.

**Focus for development**

- Continue work on developing a shared understanding of specific Christian values, which will enable pupils to articulate the difference Christian teaching makes to their lives.
- Develop more formal procedures for the regular evaluation of collective worship involving a wide range of stakeholders.
- Embed assessment systems in Religious Education (RE) and develop further opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in self-assessment.

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

St Peter's provides a 'challenging and stimulating learning environment' in the 'context of Christian values' as described in its Mission Statement. The Methodist foundation of the school is apparent on entry to the school with the school badge prominently displayed, such as in the large colourful mosaic in the playground. Stimulating and high quality displays of pupils' creative work around the school illustrate some Christian values, such as respect, and link Biblical texts to work in PHSCE. Specific Christian values special to the school have not yet been identified and displayed. This is part of on-going work by senior leaders, planned to support pupils' spiritual development further. All classrooms display attractive work celebrating achievement in RE, along with posters of regularly used prayers, accessible for pupils' use. Parents make a positive choice of St. Peter's, mainly for its Christian foundation, but also because of what they describe as the school's focus 'on the whole child' and a 'child-centred' approach. Pupils echo this, saying 'we're all friendly here and we treat each other like one big family'. Pupils also explain that the Christian ethos helps them learn how to develop good relationships with their peers and understand that when things go wrong 'we can ask to be forgiven'. Relationships between pupils are enhanced by a buddy system, where each Y5 pupil supports a new entrant in the Foundation Stage class, a source of great pride to all parties. Christian values, which inspire school life, are evident through

opportunities for pupils to be of service to others, such as serving as School Council representatives and participating in charity fundraising events. Pupils are prepared for becoming responsible citizens through, for example, managing the School Council budget and participating in a Gardening Club, which grows and sells fruit and vegetables. The attractive outside play space has quiet reflective areas, one enhanced by an African mural, which promote pupils' appreciation of the beauty of God's world. RE makes an outstanding contribution towards the distinctive Christian character of the school, such as in the enhancement of pupils' spiritual development provided by RE Week. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to take part in activities for young people at Canterbury Cathedral and enjoy imaginative workshops in school. One such led to the creation of a fabric collage hanging, which was displayed and enjoyed by members of St Peter's Church. R.E. is very well taught through the Diocesan syllabus, adapted to pupils' individual needs, with a balance of learning focussed on both AT1 and AT2. In an excellent Year 5 lesson observed, pupils were able to dramatise their understanding of what is meant by the word 'church' and later came to the conclusion that a 'church' was much more than a building. Good assessment procedures in R.E. have been put in place and will be further enhanced by training for staff, with a view to increasing opportunities for pupils to undertake more self-assessment.

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

Collective worship is held daily, and is led by the Headteacher, the Minister, local Methodist independent school chaplain, lay preachers, staff, or visitors from local Churches including the Salvation Army. All speak highly of the weekly worship held at St. Peter's Methodist Church, referred to enthusiastically by the pupils as 'our church'. A sense of community is fostered by the attendance of parents at these services, particularly for Christian Festivals, when worship is led by the pupils. There is a focal point for worship in the school hall, enhanced by a display of John Wesley, featuring his rules. These, along with the school prayer, and Lord's Prayer are learned by heart, thus reinforcing pupils' understanding of Methodist tradition and practice. Pupils enter the hall quietly and respectfully, joining in singing with enthusiasm. They participate confidently, such as when pupils lead prayer, using contributions displayed on the Prayer Tree. They understand that worship is a time 'to praise God', 'to show respect' and to 'say thank you'. One pupil explained that worship made him feel the need to 'help people' because 'Jesus is our model'. Worship is planned and recorded by the Headteacher and senior leaders using carefully selected themes. The Diocesan scheme and a wide range of resources, such as for the interactive whiteboard, ensure that worship is relevant and maintains a high level of pupil interest and participation. Pupils and staff give informal feedback and their views are expressed through School Council discussions and staff meetings. Although parental feedback on worship is welcomed, a formal evaluation and monitoring system involving all stakeholders is not yet in place.

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

The Headteacher exercises dedicated leadership as demonstrated in the school's inspirational work with its linked Methodist school in Ghana. Mutual support is evident through exchange visits, sharing of worship songs and regular contact between the two schools' staff and pupils. The school is committed to Fair Trade and plays a key role in St Peter's 'One World Week' celebration. This reinforces the school's strong sense of community cohesion. Issues from the last inspection have, in the main, been successfully addressed. The aspect regarding a formal evaluation system for collective worship is part of on-going work and is included in the current school improvement plan. Staff (including the leader for RE), governors and the Methodist Day Visitor take part in thorough monitoring of RE teaching and the school's Christian ethos, leading to identified issues for improvement and a shared vision for future development. Advice is sought from both the Methodist Church and the Canterbury Diocese, ensuring the availability of a high level of supportive expertise. Governors and staff promote pupil, staff and parental participation in events in St Peter's Church, other local churches and the Cathedral, for example in the annual St. Nicholas Day Parade. The church is used regularly for RE teaching, enabling pupils to gain a greater understanding of Christian symbols and of use of features, such as the font for baptism. Pupils attend Sunday Junior Church and a Governor runs a weekly coffee morning for parents and toddlers. The school's Christian foundation is discussed at staff interviews and continuing professional development for all staff and governors is given a high profile, thus ensuring effective succession planning.