



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christ Church Church of England VA Primary School

Baker Street,
Weston-Super-Mare,
North Somerset
BS23 3AF

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: North Somerset

Dates of inspection: 8th May 2014

Date of last inspection: 28th April 2009

School's unique reference number: 109219

Headteacher: Mr Clive Wilson

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Carolyn Banfield - 610

School context

Christ Church Church of England school is a smaller than average primary school where most of its pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium and those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The number of pupils supported by school action is below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church Church of England school is good

- The clear and distinct Christian ethos is well established and identifiable throughout the school
- Christian values underpin the life of the school and are clearly articulated and practised to effectively guide behaviour, influence attitudes and nurture individuals
- Commitment of the school to the development of each and every child is evident
- Good quality experiences allow children to develop an awareness of their spirituality

Areas to improve

- Extend the opportunities and experiences available through the school/church partnership to enhance the Christian foundation and enrich the delivery of worship and Religious Education
- Monitor Religious Education rigorously so that a more informed process identifies how to ensure the highest standards of teaching and learning
- Develop a programme to ensure pupils understand Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith

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

The school's status is visibly proclaimed through its documentation, signage, Christian symbols and vibrant displays which celebrate the success of this inclusive school community. A welcoming and caring atmosphere has been established within a purposeful and hard working environment. The strong Christian ethos permeates every aspect of school life and visitors and parents describe an almost tangible awareness of 'something special' when they enter the building. This is because the school clearly demonstrates the roots of its ethos in explicit Christian values which are well embedded and

influential in the way the school community is shaped and the attitudes and behaviours it adopts. The defining values are readily articulated by all stakeholders who talk confidently about the distinctive nature of the school and how the ethos statement and values are modelled, promoted and practised. Pupils understand the importance of these values and the impact they have on their lives. They see that positive changes occur when values are adhered to and are able to cite many examples where these have improved their community and enhanced relationships. This is why they consistently make reference to the need to 'treat others as you would wish to be treated.' Pupils are very eager and encouraged to take responsibility for activities, including positions as peer support at lunchtimes through membership of a buddy team. Pupil progress is carefully monitored and an efficient use of data ensures that the needs of all, including vulnerable groups, are being successfully met. A determination to achieve high academic standards irrespective of a child's starting point is balanced with a real commitment to a holistic approach. Set within this framework exemplary care, guidance and support for the pupils and their families is provided and the role of the Pupil Parent Support Worker is especially effective, valued and appreciated. The Christian character of the school and the emphasis placed upon time and space for reflection is having a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners. The opportunities offered through a creative and rich curriculum and regular occasions to engage in high quality experiences, have allowed pupils to develop personal spirituality in a very real sense. Some of the older pupils are able to articulate this spirituality and also describe 'the feeling' within the school which allows them to explore their innermost emotions in a very meaningful and unthreatening way. The outstanding nature of the school's distinctiveness is as a result of the resolute focus demonstrated by leaders, and the high quality of worship and Religious Education (RE) taking place.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Good quality collective worship is central to the life of the school and makes a positive contribution to the spiritual development of all. Pupils recognise that this is a special time in the school day and describe a sense of togetherness and community which the occasion engenders. The context for worship together with the reverent and calm atmosphere created, allows pupils the time and space to interact with the distinctively Christian messages being shared. The carefully considered foci of the worship table and the sensitive use of pictures, effectively prepare the school for participation. As a result, pupils have a growing awareness of the significance worship has for them personally as well as collectively. The values led approach is having a significant impact on behaviour and attitudes. Pupils are united in their opinion that the values shared at school make a real difference to their lives and talk convincingly about situations where values have influenced choices and therefore outcomes. Because the pupils have been actively involved in creating the values related displays found in the school hall, they very successfully remind, uphold and affirm the vision of this community. Through a variety of styles, themes and meaningful experiences, pupils are engaged in worship and recall aspects of Jesus' life which have been taught through Bible stories and songs. God, Jesus and the Trinitarian nature of Christianity is a clear part of the worship pattern. Whilst this remains at an elementary level, worship is beginning to develop pupil belief and understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Major Christian festivals are celebrated both at school and in church and this is helping develop the school community's understanding of the cycle of the church year. Pupils speak animatedly about services held in church and parents identify the benefits to be gained if the already strong links enjoyed with the local church were increased further. Prayer is an important feature of daily life and pupils are encouraged to contribute to worship through the prayers they have written. Good use is made of classroom prayer boxes allowing pupils to express themselves in their own way.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good

The subject of RE has a high profile within the school and is led by an extremely dedicated and effective coordinator. As a result of the structured programme using the Locally Agreed Syllabus, together with the schools thematic approach to the curriculum, attainment in RE is in line with that of the core subjects. Teaching is creative and pupils say that they enjoy the subject as 'teachers make it fun and challenge our thinking'. The introduction of 'Big Questions' has clearly had a positive impact on the way that pupils are taught and has had a major influence on the way the school targets both learning about and learning from religion. Because of this approach, pupils recognise that they are motivated and one boy stated 'I want to be the best I possibly can be and I'm taught how to do that at this school.' The mechanisms in place to explore significant issues have led pupils to a greater understanding of their personal worth and developed their confidence in knowing who they are and the importance of their own identity. A programme of lesson observations, work scrutiny as well as careful monitoring of

planning and assessment has led to improvements indicating that the teaching and learning is very good overall. This enables the pupils to achieve a good understanding of Christianity and some aspects of other major world religions. Examples of charitable giving such as the sponsorship of a child in Haiti is helping to give focus to diversity of need and cultural differences. Visits to church also enhance learning. The lessons observed during the inspection featured clear Christian teaching, high levels of questioning, time for reflection and relevant interaction with the stimulus provided. As a result, key RE skills are defined and employed by the pupils and this contributes considerably to their spiritual development. For example, in Year 2 where an exploration of feelings about the natural world required analysis and an empathetic approach, pupils used their own experiences and the class teachers' skilful leadership to arrive at a clear understanding of 'awe'. Pupils are keen to talk about their learning and especially value experiences such as the themed day on light that help to develop their understanding of less concrete concepts. This has made a lasting impression and supports their understanding of Jesus as the light of the world and the implications this has for Christians. RE is not yet outstanding because monitoring and evaluation needs to become more rigorous to provide focused action planning and accelerate the year on year progress already apparent.

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

The Headteacher has a strong vision for the school and has worked hard with governors, staff and pupils to share and develop that vision. He provides very effective leadership which contributes significantly to the promotion of the distinctive Christian ethos and stakeholders are wholly supportive of the schools aims. The Christian heritage of the school is a recognised source of pride and the recently celebrated 150th anniversary is testament to the lasting church foundation. Parents express their appreciation of the school's values and how these prepare their children for future life. Many choose the school specifically because of the Christian character. Very effective use is made of additional funding such as pupil premium to support vulnerable groups and the various support strategies in place enable pupils to make good progress. The way that leadership responds to issues of attendance and behaviour is couched within clear Christian principles which are encouraging and supportive. Because the distinctive Christian character of the school has an important place on the School Development Plan governors are able to challenge the school to account for itself and to accurately evaluate its successes. This has substantially influenced the way in which the leadership team have responded to the development points from the last inspection and aided the considerable progress they have made in other aspects as a result. A genuine desire to ensure that the school offers the highest quality provision it can for the benefit of the children and the community is reflected in many areas. For example, the introduction of a joint Mothering Sunday and Harvest service is evidence of the leaderships' recognition for a need to strengthen existing links with the church. The decision by the church to purchase Bibles for the school demonstrates the level of commitment and positive partnership currently shared. Pupils talk confidently about Christianity but are less secure in their understanding of it as a worldwide faith. It is clear that staff work well as a team and that those relationships are based upon mutual respect. The Diocese provides good support for continued professional development and staff are empowered by the range of opportunities open to them. The relatively new leadership team are passionate about maintaining the improvements made and this gives an indication that the school has a strong capacity to improve even further.

SIAMS report May 2014 Christ Church Church of England Primary School, BS23 3AF