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

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| **Cerne Abbas Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School**  **Duck Street, Cerne Abbas, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7LA**  **Previous SIAMS grade:** Outstanding  **Current inspection grade:** Good  **Diocese: Salisbury**  Local authority: Dorset  Dates of inspection: 1 February 2016  Date of last inspection: 11 March 2011  School’s unique reference number: 113759  Headteacher: Rachel Horne  Inspector’s name and number: Revd David Hatrey 844 |
| **School context**  Cerne Abbas Church of England VC First School is a much smaller than average school with 62 children on roll, arranged as three classes. The school serves the village of Cerne Abbas and the surrounding area. There are no children who have English as an additional language at the school. The number of children that have Special Educational Needs (SEN) is just below the national average. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cerne Abbas Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School as a Church of England school are good.**   * Christian values are evident across the school and make a difference to the lives and choices of the children. * The new leadership of the school is passionate and dynamic and is making a substantial impact on the Christian distinctiveness of the school, so that this is developing rapidly. * Children at the school make good and often better progress and develop excellent attitudes towards learning. * Religious education (RE) has a high priority in the school, due to the expertise of the co-ordinator, and children are fully engaged in their work. |
| **Areas to improve**   * Fully implement and embed the school’s current action plan regarding the development of children’s spirituality, so that progression in the level of challenge of experiences lead to a greater impact on children’s understanding and thinking. * Ensure monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by all stakeholders is undertaken regularly that identifies ongoing development and impact. * Develop a more innovative role of the children’s worship group so that they make a greater contribution to the planning and leading of collective worship. |

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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners**  The school’s values are derived from the ‘fruits of the spirit’ found in Galatians. These in turn are underpinned by seven values/attitudes to loving and learning; the 7Cs. This vision is reflected in the school’s mission statement, ‘Learn to Love, Love to Learn and Respect for the World’. These 7Cs have a very high profile across the school with even the youngest describing what they look like in others and themselves. In lessons, children are frequently aware of what values they need to use and are adamant that they make a real difference to their lives and actions. They confidently state that values shape the community they live in and others around them. Whilst rewards acknowledge when children use the 7Cs, their understanding goes beyond this because they know it is right to live them out because these values come from God. Parents have a good understanding of these values and confirm that they are used at home. Through the values, children understand that they are special, but equally aware that everyone is important to God. This is reflected in the support for children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These children make as good progress as other children nationally. The school has effective structures and systems in place to develop self-esteem and confidence. Their attitudes to learning are developed carefully so that they are happy and have the skills to learn. Children report that Christian values have a strong emphasis on actions and their relationships. Relationships and empathy between staff and pupils is excellent. Bullying is rare, as is any name calling, and behaviour is outstanding. A detailed audit of provision for spirituality, and the impact that this has, involved governors and staff. This resulted in an enhanced provision that includes recently introduced reflection days and reflection diaries. An astute programme of progression in spirituality has identified experiences which are developed and deepened year upon year. At present it is too early to discern the impact that this has made. However, children value the opportunities to reflect and talk about these times as opportunities to think through their day, reflect when they are sad and what has made them happy. One child commented that these times ‘brought me closer to God’. Religious education makes a good contribution to the promotion of the Christian ethos. Children across the school have a good attitude to RE with a thirst for learning and a desire to learn more. They have a good level of knowledge and understanding and show an interest in the questions of others and are confident to share and discuss ideas. Children realise that Christians in other countries show their faith in other ways. They identify shared values, show respect and tolerance for those of difference faiths or opinions in daily situations. Charitable support for churches and orphanages, allow them to help others and make a real change to their lives. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**  Acts of worship cover a broad range of themes that explicitly promote the school’s values. The collective worship coordinator has skilfully woven ideas from the fruits of the spirit, the Christian calendar, the 7Cs, ideas from the spiritual programme and other current themes into a coherent programme that contributes towards children’s understanding of Christian values. Bible stories give examples of how to forgive or use the fruits of the spirit in practical everyday situations. Children draw upon Jesus’s teaching and talk with confidence about parables, such as the Good Samaritan and similar stories, and explain that this is how Jesus would like them to live. Leaders of collective worship pose the questions such as, ‘does God want you to learn something from this worship?’ which reflects the Christian vision of the school. Short times of reflection are provided for children to consider how these questions can be answered. Worship engages and interests the children. It is delivered with a positive pace, uses a range of visual images. Children contribute through drama and lively action songs to which they respond enthusiastically. Children recognise that collective worship is a special time to be with God. The lighting of candles and use of Christian symbols help to make it a distinct time in the school day. Children join the local church community in celebrating major festivals with each class contributing in some way. The children’s understanding of these festivals is therefore good and they talk thoughtfully about their real meaning. Children have a good understanding of prayer. Prayer has a central role in the life of the school. The youngest children know that prayer is talking with God. They are taught to pray about being thankful, asking for help, praying for others or saying ‘I love you’. Some older children move on from this and are beginning to consider how God’s will for particular situations might or might not be answered as they would like. Children explain that they use prayer when they feel worried or unsafe or want to share something with God. Some say that this has generally been a positive experience for them. Children have a good understanding of Jesus and his significance for them through Bible stories and the contribution of the ‘Open the Book’ team from the church. Children have the beginnings of an understanding of the Trinity. Some monitoring of collective worship has been carried out although not regularly or systematically, nor are children involved in this. Improvements in collective worship have therefore not been clearly identified, although the new leadership team are already involved in developing this area. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding.**  The headteacher together with other senior leaders have brought a new passion and dynamism to the school as a church school. They have a strong vision in which Christian values impact on the lives of children through the choices they make now and in the future. Monitoring and evaluation are now more robust and systematic. Governors and staff accurately identify the impact that new initiatives have upon the lives of the children. For example, monitoring of plans to enhance the quality of spirituality involve listening thoughtfully to children, whose responses show a greater depth of understanding which help identify ways they can improve further. These initiatives reflect the headteachers’ good understanding of the much higher standards required by the SIAMS framework They are making significant progress towards meeting them. Specific training to support staff in developing the skills to implement new initiatives, such as spirituality and the drive to improve the quality of RE teaching from good to outstanding is very effective. Expertise from the Diocese has contributed to this and the heads themselves have a wealth of knowledge that they share. The parish priest has developed good relationships with children and adults through his commitment and regular support. His many contributions to the school effectively draw upon the resources and skills of the church community and this enhances the children’s understanding of the life and work of the church. Children respond to incidents around the world by organising fund raising events, often in conjunction with the church. Parents cannot commend the school highly enough. Opportunities for parents to be involved in evaluation regarding collective worship is not fully developed and greater depth is needed to offer new directions or improvements in this aspect of school life. Parents state that their children love to come to school even when they are unwell. They feel welcome and valued by the school and believe that staff are dedicated to each of their children. Parents and children say that they are equally proud of their Christian family school. |

SIAMS report February 2016 Cerne Abbas CE VC First School Dorchester Dorset DT2 7LA