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

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| **St Nicholas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**  The Leaze, Bromham, Chippenham, Wiltshire  SN15 2EY  **Previous SIAMS grade: Good**  **Current inspection grade: Outstanding**  **Diocese: Salisbury Diocese**  Local authority: Wiltshire  Date of inspection: 8 March 2016  Date of last inspection: 18 February 2011  School’s unique reference number: 126307  Head teacher: Hilary MacMeekin  Inspector’s name and number: Sally Naish 780 |
| **School context**  St Nicholas is a small primary school with 81 children on roll, serving mainly the village of Bromham but increasingly attracting families from further afield. The majority of children are from a white British heritage. The headteacher took up her post in September 2013. The school has a higher than average number of children with special educational needs. St Nicholas Church and the Methodist Chapel are situated close to the school. There is a separate pre-school on site. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Nicholas as a Church of England school are outstanding**   * The Christian ethos of the school, led by an inspirational headteacher and supported by committed staff and governors, informs every aspect of school life. * The confidence and behaviour of children reflect the care and dedication of staff and governors in developing the unique potential of every member of the school. * The Christian vision encourages all members of the school community to develop their gifts and talents and use them to serve others. |
| **Areas to improve**   * Involve children in innovative ways to lead the monitoring of collective worship so that its impact on their personal and spiritual development can be robustly evaluated and lead to challenging improvements. |

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| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**  Children in school aspire to do their best not just for themselves but to help others. The school’s ethos statement has changed to ‘a variety of gifts but the same spirit’, (1 Corinthians 12). This supports children’s learning by encouraging them to use their God-given skills, talents and gifts to be the best they can be as well as to use them to benefit others. Explicit Christian values have created a culture of care and inclusion where children readily support one another across the school. Based on the Christian principle of loving one another, behaviour and relationships are outstanding, modelled by dedicated staff. Children are taught skills of mediation and reconciliation so that they are largely able to manage their own disputes. They insist there is no bullying in school. The headteacher is seen as inspirational as a catalyst for building community life and a shining example of Christian compassion. She is willing to ‘go the extra mile’ in welcoming children and families with a variety of needs and her attitude has led to an inclusive, flexible and compassionate school community. An example of this is, having watched a video on the life of refugee children as part of religious education (RE), children are determined to find ways to use their gifts to raise funds to support refugee families in Wiltshire. The Christian ethos and engaging and relevant teaching help children to achieve their best. As a result standards are improving in all subjects. The ethos also supports the innovative and challenging teaching of RE and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. There are excellent links with numerous village organisations and local churches. One example of the impact of this is the village Carnival Committee who have funded reflection diaries for all children in the school which will help them to focus further on their personal and spiritual development. Spirituality has become further embedded since the last inspection through careful weaving of the ethos, worship and RE with the development of skills and talents. There are various areas both in and outside the school building where children can go to think or reflect. Children benefit from stimulating activity days based on the themes of Lent and Easter which enhance their understanding and spiritual development. Children understand that Christianity is a world-wide faith and can discuss some of the origins of this. They have an excellent understanding of diversity and local, national and international issues through judicious teaching, trips and visitors. Where they see injustice they feel compelled to take action. Children are articulate and passionate about their beliefs reflecting opportunities for high quality discussion for example in RE and philosophy for children (P4C) which in turn enhances their thinking and writing skills. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**  Daily acts of worship make a considerable impact on the life of the school. They are carefully planned by the leadership team and focus on Christian values such as peace and faithfulness which children relate to their own lives. Children particularly value the weekly ‘Open the Book’ sessions, reflecting that taking part helps them to understand more about the stories. Where possible the school makes links between all collective worship sessions during the week so they are cohesive and become a starting point for learning. Collective worship is structured so that there are regular opportunities for children to discuss and reflect in groups during worship and discussions are often followed up in class. An example of this is in an act of worship which focused on the parable of the talents; children in groups discussed how they could use their talents to help others. Children later planned how to do this in their RE lesson and talked enthusiastically about how they would use their different talents to raise money. Worship helps children to face difficult times in their lives. They relate that acts of worship on the subject of heaven helps them come to terms with the loss of loved ones. Older children, acting as school ambassadors and worship leaders, have an increasing part to play in the preparation of collective worship. Children and parents enjoy celebrating festivals in the village churches which children help plan and organise. Children understand the relevance of the church year, Christian festivals and symbols such as lighting a candle to show Jesus is with us. They are less conversant with traditional Christian prayers and concepts such as the Trinity. Prayers are offered at lunchtime as well as during worship. Although children value prayer, they are not yet using their own prayers in collective worship. Worship is formally evaluated by governors and informally by groups of children with the headteacher each term. However, children do not yet systematically evaluate worship more frequently. |
| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**  The strong Christian vision of the headteacher has enabled the school to make very good progress in developing its Christian character since the last inspection. Explicit Christian values are now firmly embedded and make an outstanding impact on all aspects of school life, led and modelled by the headteacher who has created a ‘culture of development’ in all areas. The value placed on each child’s progress and achievements helps children rise to the challenges of learning, with a child commenting, ‘my teacher knows me and what I need to do to improve’. Parents agree that the Christian nurturing environment enables children to make good progress stating that, ‘this is a can do school where everyone tries their best’. As a result of the Christian vision and leadership, well planned interventions and supportive teaching, standards are rising. Funding for pupil premium is largely spent on supporting individuals and the school’s effective, inclusive practice in supporting pupil and family needs is recognised by outside practitioners as excellent. Foundation governors play an active part in the daily life of the school and monitor and evaluate Christian distinctiveness very thoroughly as part of school development planning. Self-evaluation is accurate and reflective with a strategic analysis of strengths and areas to improve. Because of this culture of development, the school has the capacity to continue to improve. The headteacher coordinates collective worship and RE which meet statutory requirements. Her extensive knowledge enables her to give excellent support to less experienced members of staff. The importance she places on these areas can be seen by her advice and support to other schools as well as her contribution to local and national initiatives. An example of this is a scheme of work on World War 1 which she produced for the Bible Society website. The school is fully involved in the life of the community and its churches to their mutual benefit. Parents are fulsome in their praise of the wide opportunities offered and the time that all staff make in meeting the individual needs of both children and families. There are very close ties with the thriving on-site nursery resulting in almost all children transferring to the school. Inexperienced staff and new governors are well supported to develop their skills and expertise. Leaders make good use of resources and support from the diocese in order to move the school forward. |

SIAMS report March 2016, St Nicholas CE VC Primary School, Bromham, Chippenham SN15 2EY