



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Coopers Lane
Verwood
Dorset
BH317PG

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Date of inspection: 27 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 19 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 132767

Headteacher: Jane Green

Inspector's name and number: Marcia Headon 761

School context

Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Church school has 149 children on roll aged between four and nine, most of whom come from the town of Verwood. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage and there are very few children who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of children who have special educational needs or disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding. At its most recent Ofsted inspection in 2014 the school was graded as outstanding.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Trinity First as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The many opportunities for spiritual reflection allow pupils to develop their personal well-being and sense of worth.
- The pupils' perception of the nature and purpose of prayer deepens their understanding of issues of faith.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher provides a clear Christian vision for the development of the school.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the pupils can explain how the Christian values of the school are represented by the artefacts which the school uses to exemplify them.
- Improve marking in religious education (RE) so that pupils are given clear guidance on how they can improve their work.
- Ensure that the teaching of RE, places greater emphasis on learning how religious issues relate to pupils' lives at school and beyond.

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

At Trinity First School all children are valued, nurtured and made to feel special. They talk with pride about doing things the 'Trinity Way' by which they mean caring for one another, and showing friendship, respect and compassion, not only in school, but to the wider community. The pupils use five artefacts to represent their values but currently cannot explain the connection between these symbols and Christian values. Pupils are supported well in their learning as a result of the special help which is given to each child and the belief that all children have individual God-given talents. Children achieve well. A much higher proportion of pupils than the national average reached a good level of development by the end of Reception in 2015 and a higher than average percentage were above the expected level in the phonics tests in Year 1. Because of the care and highly inclusive nature of the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make more progress than most children nationally as they move up the school. Pupils feel trusted and safe and know they are cared for well. Attendance is high as pupils want to come to school. The headteacher follows up any absence rapidly and deals with it sensitively, always offering support in line with the school's ethos. Pupils' spiritual development is a growing strength. It is carefully planned for and there are many opportunities to reflect both within the curriculum, in extra-curricular activities and at breaktimes. The recently held Spirituality Day around the story of the calming of the storm shows how the depth of reflection is increasing. One Year 2 pupil asked 'how may miracles occur each day now?'. Pupils' moral and social development is very well catered for especially as a result of collective worship and RE. Pupils know right from wrong and behaviour is exemplary. There have been no permanent exclusions. Pupils are aware of cultural differences and show tolerance to others, including those of no faith. They fundraise for a school in Uganda and know how the lives of children there are very different from theirs. Relationships between all members of the school are harmonious and trusting.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship has a significant impact upon the pupils because they enjoy it as a time when they come together to praise God, to listen to meaningful stories and to share their prayers. As one pupil reported, 'It is a good time to talk to God and say your own prayer in your head'. Another, when he acted badly towards a teaching assistant, reflected to a member of staff that his behaviour had not demonstrated the friendship shown by Ruth to Naomi as he had been told in collective worship. Collective worship is planned carefully by the headteacher together with the local curate. It is based on the 'Values for Life' programme and the Christian calendar and always includes Bible stories. Music and the lighting of candles indicate the beginning of worship and pupils confidently make simple Anglican responses to opening and closing sentences. They join in very enthusiastically with songs and are eager to participate in drama and to respond to questions asked by the person leading collective worship. A variety of people, both clergy and lay members from other churches as well as the headteacher and staff, lead worship and this allows pupils to experience different ways of worshipping. Christian festivals are celebrated strongly and school services held at the local church are well attended by parents. Pupils demonstrate a good age-appropriate understanding of the Trinity. Prayer is very important in the life of the school. Pupils write prayers which are used in collective worship but also spontaneously volunteer to say prayers. They demonstrate a good understanding of the nature and purpose of prayer and use the prayer tree and prayer boxes very appropriately. Each class has written a class prayer and currently they are discussing a school prayer. Through an elected worship group pupils are involved in evaluating collective worship. This is still at the level of evaluating the actions and process of worship, but governors are very assiduous in evaluating the impact of worship and acting upon recommendations.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education is an important subject in the school and is given discrete teaching time each

week. It follows the Dorset Agreed Syllabus and standards in RE are on a par with those in English and are generally above expectations. Pupils make good progress in RE. However, more emphasis is placed on learning about religion than from it and there is less discussion on how the topics covered relate to pupils' lives today. RE is carefully planned with the staff, all of whom teach it. Work in RE books is generally good. There is careful tracking of pupils' progress but marking is not always sufficiently thorough to give pupils enough help on how to improve their work. The study of Islam and Judaism in Year 2 and Year 4, as well as Christianity, enables pupils to make comparisons across religions and a recent visit to a synagogue has stimulated pupils' interest in finding out more about Judaism. The newly introduced class RE journals and reflections have contributed well towards developing pupils' spirituality and this is being carefully planned with an emphasis upon self, others and the world. The new initiative of sending home 'Reflective bags of artefacts' linked to a specific event in the life of Jesus, has been highly successful in developing parents' involvement in RE. Pupils in Year 1 have written some excellent reflections on Easter which demonstrates their depth of understanding of its true meaning. The headteacher, who acts as RE coordinator, provides good leadership of the subject. She monitors lessons and carries out scrutinies of books with staff. To date, although there has been internal moderation of pupils' work, there has been no external moderation with another school. Pupils clearly enjoy a variety of work in RE. A Year 3 class were enthusiastically involved in discussing how God's work had been spread throughout the world over time. Their discussion and ideas about five unknown pictures of people from different countries showed their good understanding of the nature of Christianity worldwide. They like drama, the visits to the local church and music. All of these make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE is well resourced.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school. She provides excellent leadership. Her compassionate, welcoming manner sets the tone of the school as a Christian community. She knows each child individually. Equally, she knows and cares for her staff, supporting them in times of need but also setting high expectations and challenging them if these are not delivered. Improvement plans are well targeted. Leaders of future church schools are being developed and the staff have had continuing professional development although relatively little has been given on the teaching of RE. Foundation governors are fully involved in the life of the school. Through their Foundation Committee, which has clear terms of reference, they monitor the Christian distinctiveness, by being frequent visitors to school, receiving reports and by analysing surveys. They provide rigorous challenge and support. Links with the local church are strong. The curate has provided excellent support to the school and the puppet-show provided annually by church members is highly appreciated by the pupils. The school contributes to the parish magazine and pupils are frequent visitors to the local church in lessons and through collective worship. Links with the Diocese are also strong. Parents are very supportive of the school and value the strong moral code and Christian message which their children are being given.

SIAMS report May 2016 Trinity First School Verwood Dorset BH31 7PG