

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Fontmell Magna St Andrew's CE VA Primary School

West Street, Fontmell Magna, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 0PF

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Dorset
Date of inspection	23 November 2016
Date of last inspection	31 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 112380
Headteacher	Anna Way
Inspector's name and number	Marcia Headon 761

School context

St Andrew's is a small rural primary school of 164 pupils with a wide catchment spanning six parishes. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and only a small number speak English as an additional language. A fifth of the pupils receive special educational needs support, which is just above the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding is just above the national average. The school holds the Artsmark Gold award and is an accredited Arts Centre. A new vicar joined the Iwerne Valley Benefice in December 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The strong partnership with the local church provides valuable support to the school.
- Collective worship makes an impact on the life of the pupils.
- Religious education (RE) makes a useful contribution to the pupils' growing moral and cultural development.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the pupils understand the biblical roots which underpin the school's values so they can appreciate and explain their Christian origins.
- Develop the work on Christian concepts in the teaching of religious education (RE) in order to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Review assessment processes in RE so that individual pupils' work is marked more robustly and the school has a more accurate picture of standards and progress.
- Develop the leadership of RE in order to raise further the profile of the subject in the school and to ensure the quality of teaching and learning is more rigorously monitored so that pupils make faster progress.

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

The school's five core values are well known by staff and pupils and influence much of its work. Pupils show care for one another, as is evidenced by the way Year 6 pupils act as buddies to Reception children and the manner in which classmates cared for a pupil with a physical disability before and after the collective act of worship. Although most pupils understand the importance of the school's values in their lives and sometimes can link them to stories they hear in collective worship, they are not strongly enough rooted in the biblical teaching which underpins them and are not seen as being distinctively Christian. Some of the values, such as humility, are not fully understood by pupils and, although some older pupils demonstrate understanding by explaining that it is wrong to boast when receiving an award in the weekly celebration act of worship, its meaning is not widely appreciated. The values of kindness, responsibility and forgiveness are reflected in the pupils' actions.

Behaviour is generally good and the school responds in a caring and sensitive manner to nurture those in need. Through their considerable charity initiatives, pupils show their awareness of the need to help others less fortunate than themselves. However, the school policies make no reference to the Christian values of the school and the values are not evident in the headteacher's letter of welcome on the website, or in the video about the school. Relationships within the school are positive and parents speak warmly of the manner in which staff inform them of any issues and the way they help children who are less confident. There is mutual respect shown between pupils and adults.

Although the use of reflective diaries is growing and spirituality is being developed in collective worship, and work in art and music reflects a sense of inspiration and wonderment, there is not yet a sufficiently clear definition of spirituality which allows teachers to identify opportunities through the whole curriculum. In 2016 pupils achieved below national expectations at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This was a significant decline from 2015. Despite the time which was given willingly by staff to support pupils in their learning, it did not have enough effect. Attendance is very slightly below national average and where this is the case, the quality of support for child and their family reflects the school's Christian ethos. Pupils have a good understanding that the values of the school are applicable to other faiths. They spoke of the five pillars of Islam and how doing good deeds is one of them. They also know the importance of tolerance to those of other faiths and none. However, their understanding of the role of the Christian church in Britain is limited and they have little understanding of the church at an international level.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of collective worship, which are planned around themes and the major festivals of the church's year, help pupils to develop a greater understanding of what it means to be a Christian. From Bible stories, such as the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert or Daniel in the lions' den, pupils are encouraged to think about the meaning behind the stories. The messages often have a positive impact on pupils' lives, attitudes and behaviour. The majority of pupils can give examples of how collective worship has made them reflect upon their work in school and beyond. One pupil explained that at a music festival she had taken responsibility for organising and helping others because she knew from collective worship this was a good thing to do. Pupils enjoy collective worship especially when it is interactive and as one pupil said, she liked being given 'the time and space to think about God'. Lighting of the Trinity candle with a simple liturgy signals the beginning of whole school worship and for the most part pupils listen attentively, join in enthusiastically and enjoy singing. The school has rightly made the decision that in order to develop the impact of worship on the younger pupils they should, on occasions, have a separate act of worship which is more age-appropriate. Collective worship is developing pupils' spirituality.

Pupils are beginning to develop a basic understanding of the concept of God the Father and Jesus the Son and most say that the smoke going up from candles is a sign of prayers to the Holy Spirit. Pupils are aware that prayer is an important part of worship. They know the school creed and can recite the Lord's Prayer from memory. Prayers they have written are used sensitively in the local church. Themed activities held in the church to mark events in the church's year, for example Easter, Christmas and Pentecost, are helping to develop pupils' understanding of prayer. These activities help to reinforce the importance of events in the life of Jesus. There are reflective corners in classrooms but the use of these is too variable and not well understood. Pupils play an active role in class worship and in services in church but they do not contribute to the planning or delivery of whole school worship. A variety of staff and clergy are involved in leading collective worship which is extending pupils' understanding of different traditions. Pupils have been surveyed on their views on collective worship and the governors, after a period when they did not evaluate this aspect, have now begun to do so. They are beginning to act upon their findings.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Standards of attainment in RE are below those which are expected by the end of Year 6. There is not enough written work by pupils across the year groups and, where this is being done; there is not enough challenge in the work set. Assessment is underdeveloped. While the school has records of assessment for whole year groups, and uses large floor books to record this effectively, the outcomes for individual pupils are less clear. Currently, the school has not moderated its standards with any other external source. The RE curriculum is developing but the school recognises the need for further work on Christian concepts and the need to develop its enquiry-based approach. Pupils in Key Stage 1 showed gaps in their knowledge and confused the Old Testament with the New Testament. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were much more secure in their understanding of Christianity. Pupils generally enjoy RE lessons and in a Key Stage 1 class pupils joined in with enthusiasm when re-telling the Christmas story from the point of view of the little Drummer Boy. There is good coverage of other faiths such as Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism. However, links with the school's values are not systematically planned for, although teachers take the opportunity to make links as they arise. Consequently, overall RE does not make a strong enough contribution towards the spiritual development of pupils. It makes a more effective contribution to their moral, social and cultural development. The quality of teaching is variable across the school; expectations are sometimes not high enough and the pace of learning is too slow. For these reasons, pupils do not make enough progress. Questioning is generally good. In a Key Stage 2 lesson on Diwali, the teacher challenged pupils with a series of probing questions about the importance of light to different religions. However, in some lessons pupils' ideas were not always followed up and this hindered them from exploring their own thoughts about faith and meaning. The monitoring of the teaching of RE has not been sufficiently rigorous or frequent enough. In the past RE has benefited from help given by the school's development worker, especially as she has developed teachers' approaches and extended their knowledge. Teachers are developing their knowledge and skills to deliver the Discovery RE scheme with greater confidence.

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

The headteacher is committed to developing the Christian ethos of the school. She lives out the values, knowing each child well. Members of staff appreciate the kindness and compassion which she shows to them and all of the school community. The school is effectively addressing the need to constantly return to its vision and values. It is in the process of reviewing them and has redefined its vision statement following an extensive period of reflection and discussion. This was due to be launched on the 30th November as part of the school's celebration of its patronal day. Work still remains to be done in linking the values of the school to the revised mission statement. There has been no overall evaluation conducted of the impact of the church school distinctiveness. The development plan contains actions designed to address the quality of teaching and learning in RE but has no specific section committed to developing the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

The school has successfully developed future leaders of church schools, as three members of staff have gone on to promoted posts elsewhere. The school has had invaluable support in many areas from the school's development worker, whose post was funded by the benefice. She knows the school very well and, although officially having left the post, still visits the school regularly to support staff as required.

Partnership working with a number of local churches is strong. Foundation governors report back regularly on events at the school to the parochial church councils, and the school contributes to the parish magazine monthly. Local churches pray for the school. The vicar, who is relatively new to the benefice, is a frequent visitor to the school and makes a regular contribution to collective worship. The governors, a number of whom are recently appointed, are committed to the development of the school's Christian distinctiveness. The link governor takes her role very seriously and meets regularly with the headteacher. The governing body has recently begun to monitor the work of the school more closely. It has taken its training needs assiduously and is working with the Diocesan adviser on this. Parents are highly supportive of the school, speaking warmly of the help it gives to their children and families when needed and of the nurturing ethos and values which the school promotes. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.