

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| <b>Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School</b> |   |
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|   | Cross Road<br>Weymouth<br>Dorset<br>DT4 9QX |
| <b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>                                     | <b>Good</b>                                 |
| <b>Diocese</b>  | Salisbury                                   |
| Previous SIAS inspection grade  | Good  |
| Local authority   | Dorset                                      |
| Date of inspection  | 23 March 2017                               |
| Date of last inspection   | 19 April 2012                               |
| Type of school and unique reference number                                | 126911                                      |
| Headteacher   | Fiona Daykin                                |
| Inspector's name and number   | Andrew Rickett 201                          |

### School context

Holy Trinity is much larger than the average primary school with 684 children on roll. It is situated in an urban setting. The majority of children are of White British heritage and come from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The number of children with additional learning needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average while the number entitled to receive the pupil premium is below. Attendance is in line with the national average. The headteacher was appointed in January 2015. The school's leadership structure has changed significantly since the previous inspection.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values make a strong contribution to the school's distinctive Christian ethos and are increasingly making an impact on outcomes in the children's learning.
- Collective worship has a significant impact on the children's understanding of Bible stories and how they can be used to guide their actions.
- The commitment of the leaders and managers, including governors, in promoting the Christian ethos ensures that it has made good progress since the previous inspection.

### Areas to improve

- Extend the impact of the work begun to embed spirituality by creating more opportunities for children to explore a personal spirituality across the whole curriculum.
- Develop the children's language to be able to reflect on challenging questions, including their understanding of the purpose of prayer, so that they explore them in greater depth.
- Create opportunities for children to become more involved in leading acts of worship particularly in how worship themes are explored.

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

The school's ethos has improved since the previous inspection because there is a clearer vision which is more explicitly based on a Christian interpretation of the school mission. The process to explore the Christian ethos began in 2015 and involved all members of the school community. The outcome of this was the emergence of a far more simple statement that could be easily grasped. The fact that children and adults can now articulate the vision and its values has helped to bring the school community together under a single agreed statement. They explain with confidence how harmony, respect, faith and life-long learning are made possible through God's love. Although these four are referred to as 'school values', explicit links are made to values such as justice or love which have their roots in Christian teaching through Bible stories. These connections are very clear to children who explain how it is the Christian value that supports their understanding of harmony and faith. These connections are becoming stronger as further work is done to help children explore them in greater depth. For example, recent work to produce beautiful canvas artwork by children across the school has helped them explore the meaning of values such as forgiveness based on specific Bible stories. Similarly, the school has made good progress in developing its understanding of spirituality and this is already making an impact on the quality of religious education (RE) and collective worship. The school has adopted an approach to spirituality using the concept of 'windows, doors and mirrors' (WDM) to help children reflect on their experiences and learn from them. When used in RE lessons, the use of WDM enhances the quality of discussion by providing children with a framework through which they can explore their ideas and opinions. Children respond very well to this and are excited and enthusiastic when challenged to think at a deeper level. The use of WDM outside of RE is at an early stage and children are developing a broader vocabulary to express their thoughts in greater depth. The use of class reflection books for younger children, and individual reflection journals for older children, is an effective way for them to record their thinking and see how that develops over time. The greater awareness of values and understanding of a personal spirituality makes a strong contribution to the children's moral and social development. They have a clear grasp of right from wrong and a keen regard for justice. This contributes to the good quality of relationships throughout the school where children show kindness and care towards each other. Values and spirituality make less of an impact on the children's learning and their outcomes. Standards of achievement are steadily rising and children are now making good progress in their learning with the more achieving in line with national expectations for their age. Children are aware that different cultures need to be treated with respect. Older children speak with conviction when arguing that everyone should be treated equally regardless of their background. The school works hard to develop this awareness of others and children respond by taking the initiative to help those less fortunate than themselves both locally and around the world. The children's generous response in collecting for the local food bank and studying the impact of Dr Barnardo's as part of RE are good examples of how the school encourages children to think beyond their own lives.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The quality of collective worship has improved since the previous inspection because of the impact of a number of initiatives that have significantly enhanced the importance of worship in the life of the school. The simplified vision, for example, has brought greater clarity to worship themes and how they are explored. Themes do not simply follow a set of values but explore them through broader questions that provide children with greater challenge to interpret worship in ways that are relevant to them. This creates a worship pattern that responds to change and places the needs of children above rigid worship planning. An important aspect of this fluidity of approach is the regular use of reflection which gives children to think about the themes they hear and make sense of them. Therefore, a theme is explored early in the week which is then explored in more depth in classrooms with children's thoughts captured in reflection journals. The introduction of WDM as a way to help children reflect means that the quality of their reflections has deepened. A deeper appreciation of the place of prayer in the life of the school also contributes to the children's ability to reflect. Collective worship is outstanding because of the combination of exploration of themes, time for reflection, the use of WDM and a better appreciation of prayer. An aspect of worship that has not yet been fully developed is the extent to which children themselves have the opportunity to decide how they would like themes to be explored and to take a lead in exploring them. Acts of worship are distinct times in the school day and children understand that they are different to assembly as they come together to think about God, hear stories of Jesus from the Bible and pray. They have a very mature appreciation of prayer and understand that 'it isn't a wish list' or a 'time to test God'. Children, whether younger or older, are adamant that God listens to everyone's prayers, whether they have a faith or not, because 'He created everyone as equals and care for everyone'. They are developing their understanding of the nature of the Trinity saying that 'it really is rather complicated to explain in one meeting'. However, children have the confidence to attempt at explaining their understanding. A strong feature of the school is the children's openness to talk about matters of faith and belief and listen with respect to the views of others. Children have an impressive knowledge of Christian festivals throughout the church year and understand the reason why Christians celebrate Easter and

Christmas. The 'Open the book; team and volunteers from PAIS, who represent a Christian organization, make a valuable contribution to the children's growing understanding of Bible stories and prayer. Regular evaluations of collective worship are carried by children and staff each half term and these are used by the collective worship leader, who is also the RE leader, to inform outcomes of monitoring and future improvements. These have identified, for example, that children like being active in worship.

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

School leaders have ensured that the distinctive Christian ethos has improved since the previous inspection and has greater impact on the lives of children and adults in the school community. This is because there is a clearer understanding of the links between the school's mission, which has been recently revised, and explicit Christian values. There is a growing appreciation among all members of the school community that the four school values are underpinned by Christian values and that together they are 'made possible through God's love'. These values taken as a whole make a very strong impact on the children's personal development and are increasingly becoming integral to their learning, which is rapidly improving. The headteacher is fully supported by the Christian ethos lead and the RE leader who work together to implement strategies that have deepened the place of values and spirituality in the life of the school. Some of these new initiatives have not yet been fully developed, for example using WDM across all areas of the curriculum, but where values and spirituality work together, they produce some impressive reflections from children on their learning. The Christian ethos lead makes an important contribution to the ongoing development of the church ethos and works closely with the RE leader, who also takes responsibility for collective worship. Religious education is well led and the RE leader has a very clear understanding of priorities to develop the subject. Governors share the headteacher's commitment in promoting a Christian ethos that has meaning and purpose for the school community. They are knowledgeable about the school and ask challenging questions that ensure the impact of the Christian character is continually moving forward. The Curriculum and Foundation Committee has a specific remit to monitor and evaluate the Christian ethos. The work of this committee is thorough and addresses issues that relate directly to the expectations of the current inspection framework. Governors therefore have a good understanding of the latest developments and challenge the school appropriately. Monitoring of the ethos is effective and gathers good quality evidence that is used to identify strengths and areas for further improvement. The development of an approach to spirituality that is shared by everyone is an excellent example of this. Staff and governors attend relevant courses and training that develops their leadership skills in a church school context and which make a positive difference to the quality of provision as a church school. The leadership and management have a good capacity to continue to develop the school's Christian ethos and have the enthusiasm to do so in a way that challenges the whole school community. The school is awaiting the imminent appointment of a new vicar. During the absence of a vicar, the school has maintained close links with the parish church through the regular contribution of an 'Open the Book' group who lead worship and the involvement of members of the PAIS team, who help children understand and use prayer. Parents speak very positively about the school as a church school. They say that the place of Christian values in the life of the school has grown in the last few years and are now more overt. They agree that simplifying them has made them more accessible to children and that therefore mean more to them. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report March 2017 Holy Trinity CE VC Primary School Weymouth DT4 9QX