



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Pitton Church of England (VA) Primary School

White Way
Pitton
Salisbury
SP5 1DT

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: 22nd May 2014

Date of last inspection: 13th July 2009

School's unique reference number: 126490

Headteacher: Mr Michael Holyoake

Inspector's name and number: Linda Windsor (747)

School context

Pitton is a smaller than average village primary school with mixed age classes, where almost all pupils have a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils receiving pupil premium is well below average with few pupils eligible for free school meals. Although the proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs supported at school action is well below average, those at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Pitton CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The vision, dedication and determination of the headteacher and all in the school leadership group, including governors
- A welcoming, safe, happy environment, with a clear Christian ethos, where all can flourish
- Excellent links with parents, the local church and the wider community
- Well behaved and very motivated pupils who respect and care for each other and for others in the wider community

Areas to improve

- Embed robust systems for the monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education (RE)
- Explore and develop a range of different approaches to RE to ensure the engagement of all pupils

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

Whilst there are many outward signs and symbols that proclaim this as a church school, it is the warm, welcoming, friendly and supportive atmosphere that breathes the deeply Christian character of the school into its daily life. There is recognition that all pupils - and adults - are unique individuals, that they are loved by God and that all need to be given the right opportunities to fulfill their potential. This is reflected in the school's rigorous tracking system that ensures any issues in learning are quickly identified and action is quickly taken to improve progress and, as a result, pupils achieve well, make excellent progress and enjoy their learning. Achievements of pupils, other than academic, are also celebrated. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well addressed with a huge variety of rich and memorable experiences on offer to the children. A link to a London school helps pupils to experience and value diversity in faiths and cultures. Behaviour is a strength of the school, superbly modeled by adults and clearly linked to the Christian values held in the school. Pupils interviewed appreciated belonging to a church school, saying they know that all staff, many committed Christians, have their best interests at heart and really care for all in school. Opportunities for reflection are clearly built into the school day, within lessons as well as in RE and collective worship, giving pupils thinking time and developing the habit of reflection. Links to the local church are excellent with the church seen as being part of the school and the school as part of the church. Parents spoke of the school's values which, regardless of faith, are relevant and inform children's behaviour and all were clear on the ethos - "a fabulous family feel!" One parent spoke of the impact of all pupils knowing about Christian values. She said, "It gives the children a sound moral base, whether or not they have a faith". Members of the church and wider community have shown their feelings of fellowship for the school by making contributions e.g. the stained glass window, the wooden crosses, the prayer tree and the banners that draw together the school and the church.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship makes a central contribution to school life, reflecting on and emphasizing the school's Christian ethos and values, consequently having a positive affect on the attitudes and behaviour of all. In the worship observed, led by the headteacher, pupils clearly enjoyed the sense of calm and harmony that prevailed. Pupils take an active role in worship through reading prayers, planning the music and songs, acting illustrative sketches etc... The pupil Worship Team help plan and evaluate worship and their understanding of what interests their peers results in more interactive, pupil friendly content that ensures in greater engagement and impact. Prayer is valued and pupils' prayers from the prayer tree are read in collective worship and collected within the school's prayer book. Close links with the local clergy and church ensure pupils are very familiar with aspects of Anglican practice and feel comfortable in taking part in worship whether in school or in church. All the main Christian festivals are celebrated over the year and pupils understand the significance of each very clearly. There is a strong focus placed on the person of Jesus Christ and on helping pupils understand the concept of the Trinity which pupils are able to articulate. Foundation governors work with the headteacher to evaluate collective worship more effectively in order to improve policy and practice. The beautiful outdoor environment has space for pupils to think and reflect, if they choose, and, in school, the area by the prayer tree is also used. Pupils say both are well used. Pupils enjoy and are keen to participate in collective worship. One boy said, "Although we sit in our own spaces, in worship we are really very close together."

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Most pupils make good progress in RE although a small minority – mostly those with special educational needs - find the subject hard to access and are less engaged than their peers. In the four lessons observed, which were all good, most pupils demonstrated a high level of knowledge, understanding and thoughtfulness. Whilst a range of creative approaches to RE are

already in place, there is a need to extend these in order to engage all pupils. Assessment is thorough, based on the 'I can' statements but linked to expected curriculum standards and these are supplemented by regular work scrutinies and lesson observations. The RE curriculum has a strong focus on the Christian faith and supports the school's ethos and values, impacting positively on the daily life of the school. There are also opportunities to compare Christianity with other faiths, resulting in pupils being able to respect and understand these, to make connections between shared values and practices and to appreciate the diversity within the wider world. Teaching is of a consistently high standard and opportunities to challenge the pupils, particularly in KS2, are planned into the termly themes. Much emphasis is placed on the teaching of RE and pupils' views are sought to inform planning. Foundation governors within the Ethos Committee have begun to observe and evaluate RE although it is too soon to judge the impact of this. Governors are committed to professional development to support the teaching of RE and the RE leader has been able to attend diocesan training and has developed her own links with other RE leaders, thus building her confidence, knowledge and understanding of the subject, leading to even better outcomes for pupils. The school improvement plan acknowledges the importance of RE with an ongoing action plan for continued improvement.

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

This school has a strong Christian ethos that is reflected in the daily life of the school and manifested in the warm family atmosphere that is much valued by all stakeholders. With a clear focus to achieving academic excellence, the school also holds firm to the understanding that all pupils are unique and special and, as such, there is a commitment to inclusion and nurture that enables all pupils to flourish, academically and personally. The school's avowed aim is to give all pupils a firm foundation, rooted in distinctively Christian values, to prepare them for their lives ahead. All adults in school are actively committed to this, led toward this goal by the faith and dedication of the headteacher. One parent spoke of the love all staff show to pupils and of how determined staff are to ensure that school is a positive, affirming place for pupils to be. Another parent, going through a difficult time, spoke of the support given by the school, especially valuing being included in prayers. Although a small school, the headteacher and governors encourage all staff in professional development to ensure their needs, and those of the pupils, are met. Governors, especially foundation governors, are involved in monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school and, as a result of being well informed, are able to both support and challenge the headteacher, shaping the direction of the school as a church school and thus enhancing its distinctiveness and effectiveness. RE has a high status in the school and there is a clear understanding how RE links to the school ethos and filters into daily life and thus influencing attitudes and behaviour, both of which are excellent. All identified areas for development have been addressed. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and RE.

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