



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Witchampton Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Wimborne
Dorset
BH21 5AP

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Dates of inspection: 26th June 2014

Date of last inspection: 25th June 2009

School's unique reference number: 113821

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Duncan.

Mrs Elizabeth West (National Leader of Education).

Mrs Melanie Whittick was acting in the capacity of Headteacher under the supervision of Mrs West while Mrs Duncan was on sick leave.

Inspector's name and number: Lorraine Pugh

School context

Witchampton is a smaller than average rural first school near to the town of Wimborne. The majority of its 53 pupils are of white British heritage. The school is organised into three classes. Pupil numbers in the school have been consistent for the past three years with significant numbers attending from outside the school's catchment area. Currently, a National Leader of Education, who is the headteacher of another local school, leads the school. She attends the school site for one day a week, liaising with the Witchampton senior teacher. The number of children with special educational needs is close to the national average. A small number of children are entitled to additional pupil premium funding.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Witchampton First School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The school's strong emphasis on explicit Christian values significantly impact on the daily behaviour and individual development of pupils.
- There are clear links between the school's Christian values, collective worship and religious education with each having Jesus and the teachings of the Bible as their focus.
- The commitment and vision of the senior leadership, supported by school governors, ensure the school continually reviews and develops its Christian vision.
- The secure partnerships between the school, parents and church community ensure the school's outstanding effectiveness as a distinctively Christian school.

Areas to improve

- Increased inclusion of the children in the planning, delivery and evaluation of worship and Religious Education (RE) in order to strengthen their involvement in the school's provision.
- Extend the role of the Foundation Governors in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school as a church school.

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

Witchampton First School is outstanding in meeting the needs of all its pupils through its distinctively Christian character. A significant contribution to the school's success is its ability to deliver the Christian ethos in a way that is appropriate to the age of the pupils. For example, each Christian value provides a whole school focus for half a term. This focus is supported by prominent displays, RE work and collective worship thus ensuring that values are deeply embedded into the life of the school. All members of the school community clearly articulate the school's values and their place in the school's Christian teaching. Pupils confidently refer to how values have supported them. For example, the value of fairness when dealing with friendship issues. The value of compassion has supported the pupils' social development. For example, their child initiated fund raising for the FA 'Street Child' Charity that arose from their study of the Brazilian world cup. Pupils speak enthusiastically about other faiths and cultures with their respect and celebration of diversity clearly evident. Values are woven through the school's approach to teaching and learning. They impact on pupil attainment through the care that teachers take in ensuring that pupils of all abilities make good progress, whatever their ability. Attainment is within the top 20% of all schools nationally. Opportunities are given during the school day for reflection thus supporting spiritual development. Relationships and pastoral systems in the school are excellent and characterized by mutual trust between all members of the school community. Pupils have ownership of class rules and are keen to explain the link to Christian values. As a result, behaviour in the school is excellent, both inside and outside of the classrooms. High quality religious education challenges pupils by giving opportunities to tackle difficult questions about faith and belief with encouragement to think deeply.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is outstanding because of its integral role in the school's expression of its Christian ethos. A well-planned programme promotes the school's Christian values and reflects the Christian calendar. Anglican traditions are included with the lighting of the candle and simple words of welcome. Relevant Christian messages are clearly given in a way that is understood by the pupils. As a result, pupils express their enjoyment of worship. They see worship as a special time in the school day when they learn about Jesus and talk to God. The weekly involvement of the church community with 'Open the book' worship plays a significant role in the pupils' increasing knowledge of Bible stories. This is evident in the range of stories referred to by pupils when discussing worship and RE. Visitors regularly lead worship and this widens the pupils' experiences of Anglican worship. Pupils are able to link worship themes to aspects of their lives and explain how this impacts on their thoughts and behaviour. Parents are aware of the school's Christian teaching because their children talk about worship themes at home. For example, referring to the values of friendship, fairness and forgiveness within sibling disputes! Pupils are able to explain Jesus' role as the son of God and God as the father who created the world. They have a developing understanding of the Holy Spirit with God and Jesus being with us at all times. Prayer plays an important role within school life and a range of prayers are said throughout the school day. Prayers have been written by the pupils and displayed in the class reflection areas or on the school prayer tree. Pupils are able to explain why they have written these prayers and why they are special to them. Evaluation of worship is good but more focus is now needed on the pupils' involvement with its planning, delivery,

monitoring and evaluation. This is something that the school is aware of and is keen to develop.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards achieved by pupils in RE are outstanding and in line with the high standards achieved in other core subjects. Lessons are well planned with teachers having excellent subject knowledge and understanding. Learners have a developing knowledge of other faiths and cultures alongside Christianity and they talk about these different faiths with interest. The quality of the teaching observed during the inspection was good with many outstanding elements. Pupils were highly engaged and they remained focused during teacher led and independent activities. Teachers used differentiated questioning to challenge and support pupils of all abilities. Drama and role-play were used skilfully as a way for learners to gain a deeper understanding of the lesson content. Pupils confidently referred to a wide range of Bible stories during class discussions. Trust and respectfulness were evident with pupils feeling secure in expressing their thoughts without fear of disagreeing with others. Teachers and teaching assistants work seamlessly together in supporting the RE learning. They assess understanding and knowledge for each pupil throughout the lesson. RE has strong links to collective worship and reinforces the Christian values teaching within the school. Class portfolios have been recently introduced for RE as a means of capturing evidence of pupil work and impact. This has already proved to be a valuable tool for assessment and future planning. The Headteacher is the RE subject leader and currently absent from school. However, during her absence the development of RE has been both maintained and developed. This is due to the enthusiasm and commitment of the school's senior teacher. She has accurately identified priorities to take RE forward and these are making a positive impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

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

Leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding. This is because school leaders are passionate about their work, keeping the school's Christian ethos at the centre of its vision. Christian distinctiveness is given a high profile to all members of the school community resulting in the school's vision being embraced and supported. Staff members talk enthusiastically about the school's Christian ethos and their role within this. Parents spoken to during the inspection were able to explain how their children benefit from the school's Christian work and how it influences behaviour outside of school. The school's leaders have established secure methods for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the Christian ethos and this has accurately identified future development. The robustness of these school systems has been tested during the Headteacher's absence. The continued development and sustained high quality of RE and worship during this time illustrates the effectiveness of the school's leadership, especially that of the National Leader of Education and the senior teacher. School leaders actively involve all members of the community in the school's work, recognizing the school's important place in the local community. All members of the community are invited to school church services whether they have pupils in the school or not. Leaders also ensure pupils have experiences that develop an understanding of local, national and global communities. The school's work in achieving its status as a Level 1 - Rights Respecting school has given pupils a strong understanding of their identity within the school community and the wider world. This has been supported by the school's partnerships with local schools in contrasting localities and charity work. Pupils are able to explain how their sponsorship for the education of a child in Gambia will impact on this child for the rest of her life. The RE foundation governor has undertaken a thorough subject review with accurate evaluations of the school's work. Increased involvement of other Foundation governors is now needed to evaluate the schools effectiveness as a church school and to further develop the foundation governors' role in steering future actions of the school. Presently, the school's local parish does not have a vicar, however, the strength of the school's leadership, and its links with the

church community have meant that the church-school partnership has continued with pupils visiting the church on a regular basis for a variety of purposes. Highly effective RE and collective worship provision ensure the school's Christian ethos and vision remain at the centre of its work. Active engagement in professional development and links with the local diocese further develop the school's understanding of what it means to be a church school.

SIAMS report June 2014 Witchampton CE VA First School, Wimborne, Dorset. BH21 5AP