



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Beechcroft St Paul's VA Primary School Weymouth

Corporation Road, Weymouth, Dorset
DT4 0LQ

Previous SIAS Grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Date of inspection: 10th December 2014

Date of last inspection: 1st October 2009

School's unique reference number: 134077

Headteacher: Sarah Sprague

Inspector's name and number: Carole McCormack (224)

School context

The school is situated in the parish of St Paul's which is a designated urban priority area. The percentage of pupils in receipt of pupil premium is 36%, well above the Dorset average. Nearly half the children have identified special education needs; a specialist nurture teacher works with families and individual children with emotional or social difficulties. The impact of a foundation unit established in 2013 on the children of accessing Beechcroft provision before the start of the Reception year is already apparent.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Beechcroft St Paul's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The partnership between the Headteacher and the parish priest creates a community that directly reflects Christian theology - the revelation of God and the concept of incarnation. The school lives out the truth of the boundless and unconditional love of God that is with us always as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.
- All aspects of provision centre on the child and the creative and flexible curriculum adapts to children's emotional and spiritual needs.
- Collective worship and Religious Education (RE) ensure that the children fully understand the application of the school's key values within their Christian context.
- The reflective introduction of Rights Respecting Schools and the Global Learning Programme has brought about an attitudinal change in the pupils who recognize the one-ness of children globally. Respect for diverse cultures and beliefs has been robustly constructed upon this recognition.
- The pro-active governing body fully supports the strategies and funding necessary to take forward the school's vibrant Christian vision and rigorously monitors this.

Areas to improve

Building on its exemplary and embedded church school practice, to continue to raise the bar of church school provision both locally and nationally through action research.

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

Beechcroft St Paul's effectiveness is based upon the school's distinctiveness as a church school. Aspects of Christian theology underpin the unswerving focus on doing the absolute best for each pupil. The partnership between the Headteacher and the parish priest ensures the fusion of transformational opportunities for spiritual growth with very high quality educational provision. The Headteacher believes passionately that: 'The thing here is about the children. About responding to need.' This response is wrapped in the joint aim of both spiritual leaders to 'build a community that reflects the love of God.' This central, unique and powerful relationship inspires the whole nexus of relationships within the school. Highly effective layered provision ensures the very best outcomes for each learner, whether academic, spiritual, or in terms of well-being. The outstanding work of the nurture teacher and inclusion co-ordinator removes emotional and social barriers to learning and both are convinced that, without the Christian ethos of the school, some learners would 'slip through the net'. High quality teaching enables the children to fully engage with the highly creative curriculum; and successful group or individual intervention strategies support or challenge individual learners. The spirituality of the children is outstanding because provision at Beechcroft replicates the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Just as 'divinity was given to us in a shape we can understand', so learning in all its fullness is interpreted tirelessly in a shape that all learners can understand. The foundation stage curriculum is planned wholly around the Christian calendar, so the framework for a strong Christian theological understanding is established from the start. A foundation governor explained how the children's understanding of Christian values enables them to effectively engage with other religions. Beechcroft has gained the Rights Respecting Schools (level 2) award and is a Global Learning Programme teaching school. Following both programmes results in a fundamental change in learners' attitudes. Children focus on the common bonds of humanity and need between themselves and children in diverse cultures. This, coupled with a passion to engage with knowledge of other faiths and peoples, prepares the way for robust respect and understanding. The school exceeds statutory requirements in its arrangements for RE and collective worship. The specifically Christian application and context of the school's key values are powerfully explored through collective and class worship, through RE and through opportunities for discussion and reflection throughout the school day. As a result of this, the children live out the values in their own lives. Their behaviour is exemplary, their understanding of key values outstandingly mature and appropriate; and, in some cases, breathtaking! 'When you look in a mirror you can't see God. He is everywhere and always with us.' The owl 'represents the wisdom of God and the people who love and respect Him.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a cherished aspect of provision at Beechcroft St Paul's. Children acknowledge its unique importance to them: 'No worship means no hope.' Staff are involved, inspired and challenged just as much as the children and talk of the 'phenomenal' theological knowledge of the parish priest that informs and enriches worship. The unique way in which the school's Christian vision is married with the secular needs of the society in which the children live is well expressed by the parish priest: 'If we don't teach our children to deal with the secular application of values as well as the Christian, we have lost our purpose.' The transformational impact of worship is readily evident from the astonishing contributions that children make, illustrating both their understanding of the Christian theology at the heart of worship and the extent to which they have become transformed in terms of their personal spirituality. For example, one child explained the zig-zag shape of the Christmas tree as being symbolic of the path set out for his life; it was through the comment of another that three candles are now lit at the start of worship to represent the trinity. The various elements of provision at Beechcroft are so coherently woven together that in worship, as in class or in speaking to a child, the children's attitudes, responses and behaviour are clearly the outcome

of a school community which utterly lives out its mission statement: 'A caring Christian family with a love of learning at its heart.' The responses of the children during worship are recorded by year 6 pupils so that they can be gathered together by the children in spontaneous prayer. The habit of reflection is very strong within the school and this is very effectively supported during the act of worship by the singing of the choir. Because relationships and communication are so strong within the school, all members of the school community are able to have an input into worship planning. A range of worship leaders, including the children, ensure that the full richness of the Christian tradition is presented to the school community. Children, staff and governors regularly monitor the impact of worship upon the spiritual development of the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

One of the areas for development in the last denominational inspection was to continue to develop RE in the light of ongoing developments. The school has addressed this very effectively and is currently running transition arrangements which continue the tracking of pupil performance through 'level' related assessments, whilst matching this to end-of-year related expectations. As a result, data is robust and demonstrates that children make at least good progress in the subject. Because of its highly inclusive approach, the school ensures that children who have difficulty in using the basic skills are supported in being able to fully express their developing spirituality in RE. There is a high proportion of outstanding teaching in RE and this is augmented by the expert subject knowledge of the parish priest who gives his time generously in the support and development of RE as in all other aspects of the school. The school follows the Dorset Agreed Syllabus supplemented by the principles of the Teaching Christianity project. The 'Discovery' scheme is being used, although staff are aware that this needs to be modified according to the context of the school and the needs of the learners. In RE, as in the rest of the curriculum, the 'What If?' approach is consistently used. This brings a questioning approach into learning which supports the personal spiritual development of the children. The Headteacher is currently RE subject leader and brings her innate habits of school improvement to the leadership of the subject.

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

The Christian vision of the Headteacher and parish priest (who is vice chair of governors) is vibrantly apparent throughout all aspects of provision and this in turn inspires staff, parents, governors and the wider community. School leaders live out the Christian values of the school, which underpin the vision, with passion and conviction. For example, the chair of governors explained that the value of respect is at the heart of governance. One parent talked of 'the invisible cloak of spirituality' that wraps around the school community. Another shared how the school had supported her own needs and consequently improved the security, confidence and performance of her child. Governors ensure that the policies and practices of the school support the highest possible achievement in all learners; but also take spiritual learning walks around school to identify how this achievement is enhanced by the school's Christian character. The highly effective chair and vice-chair monitor data closely, including a focus on children attracting the pupil premium funding and gifted and able children. Succession planning has been addressed at every level. The Headteacher is committed to the development of church school leadership and addresses this in her role within the local pyramid of schools as well as in the consultancy that she undertakes for the Diocese. Partnerships with the local church and community, diocese and parents are outstanding and enable the involvement of all members of the school community in the life of the school to an extraordinary extent. One child expressed clearly the spirit of Beechcroft: 'We are one big family – the love that we share. Our tree represents our family tree and we are each a leaf. We are a community and together we make it fantastic.'

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