



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Wareham St Mary Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Streche Road
Wareham
Dorset BH20 4PG

Previous SIAS grade: Satisfactory

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Dates of inspection: 24 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 6 April 2010

School's unique reference number: 113768

Headteacher: Lin Goldsmith

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Wareham St Mary is smaller than the average size primary school with 188 children on roll. It is situated on the edge of a market town. Most children come from a white British heritage. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average as is the number entitled to receive the pupil premium. Attendance has improved and is now in line with national expectation. Since the previous inspection, the school has been part of Local Authority reorganisation in 2012 and has moved from being a first school to an all-through primary which was completed from September 2013. A complete refurbishment took place during the reorganisation.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wareham St Mary as a Church of England school are good

- A core set of explicit Christian values make a good contribution to the children's personal and spiritual development
- Opportunities to reflect as an integral part of collective worship allow children the time to think about the impact of worship themes in greater depth
- The quality of care for each other creates a school community that values the individual

Areas to improve

- Deepen the children's understanding of their own spiritual awareness by equipping them with the language to be able to express their thoughts and idea in greater depth
- Embed the core Christian values across the whole school curriculum so that they have greater impact on learning
- Develop a more rigorous and meaningful system where by leaders and managers robustly monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's Christian ethos on the children's learning and personal development

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

The introduction of a core set of values in March 2014 has provided the school with the means to explore its Christian distinctiveness in greater depth. Five values have been agreed with the whole school community and are more firmly embedded in collective worship and make a good impact on the children's personal development and contribute to their wellbeing. Children have a clear understanding that the core values of trust, hope, forgiveness, thankfulness and friendship can be explained through stories from the Bible and by the example that Jesus showed. Children confidently discuss what the core values mean to them and how they help them in their own lives. One child expressed their view that all the values are equally important. Another said that trust was the most important because 'we rely on Jesus and God to help us do the right thing'. These core values underpin the good quality of relationships in the school and the care with which adults look after children. The core Christian values have a more limited impact on the children's learning as they have yet to be an integral aspect of classroom practice in the same way that the five learning values have become embedded in learning. Learning values, such as reasoning and resilience, are making an impact on the children's achievement which current data indicates is variable across different cohorts and groups of children. Religious education (RE) makes a good contribution to the children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development by encouraging children to look at issues such as fairness around the world and making the right moral choices. It also helps children to understand different world faiths and acquire a better appreciation of them. The development of children's spiritual awareness is more limited because opportunities to explore this are sometimes missed in lessons or not explored in sufficient depth. This means that children are not sufficiently challenged in their learning to express their thoughts and opinions about spiritual matters in depth.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The impact of collective worship has improved since the previous inspection because a more focused two year programme of worship themes has been embedded. Worship themes are explicitly linked to the school's core Christian values and underpinned by specific Bible stories that illustrate their meaning. Children are able to explain how these stories have relevance to their own lives both in school and out. The introduction of class reflection programmes has provided excellent opportunities for children to think about the values in greater depth. These reflection programmes have developed over time to respond to the needs of the children and now include challenging questions for children to discuss in their class groups and at an age appropriate level. Children understand that acts of worship are a key aspect of being a church school because they are times to 'think about God' and 'pray to Jesus'. Children speak positively about worship because they feel that it gives them time to be still and think about some of the 'hard problems in the world today'. Prayer is an important part of collective worship and there are good opportunities for prayer in the general life of the school but fewer occasions for children to write prayers spontaneously. Children have a good understanding that prayer is a way to talk to God or Jesus. They know that prayer is not a 'wish list' but an opportunity to thank God or to ask for help or say sorry. Children feel particularly strongly that God listens to and responds to everyone's prayers whether they have a faith or not because 'He loves us all equally'. The school has adequate opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the nature of the Trinity. Children talk with confidence about God the Father and Jesus as Son. They are less clear about the purpose of the Holy Spirit. Children have a good appreciation of major Christian festivals through their celebration in school and at the parish church. They know the real messages of festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Links with the church are strong through the role of the parish school and children's worker, who leads worship along with a team of clergy, but also organises special days in school for children to explore themes such as 'who's God?' and 'why would you follow Jesus?' There are some opportunities for children to lead acts of worship, particularly in class groups, but do not plan and lead them regularly.

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

The leadership and management have ensured that the school has made progress in developing its Christian distinctiveness since the previous inspection. New initiatives, such as the introduction of core Christian values and a more focused collective worship programme, have made a positive difference to the impact of the Christian ethos on the children's personal development particularly with regard to the quality of relationships throughout the school community. There is less evidence of the impact of values on the children's learning. Some of the areas for improvement from the previous report have been addressed by the school's leaders and managers. Some have still to be addressed. The role of governors in challenging the school about the impact of its Christian character is still not effective. Governors are not sufficiently aware of the school's self-evaluation process, or its outcomes, to be able to ask the right questions that challenge the school's own evaluation. The current procedures for gathering evidence and using them to identify future improvement are not robust enough. School leaders have a growing understanding of how the school's distinctive Christian ethos can make a more effective contribution to the children's learning and are committed to the development of the children's wellbeing and academic achievement. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report March 2015 Wareham St Mary CE VC Primary School Wareham BH20 4PG