



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Beaminster St Mary's Church of England Academy

Clay Lane
Beaminster,
Dorset DT8 3BY

Previous SIAS grade: Not previously inspected as an academy

Current SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Dates of inspection: 25 June 2015

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

School's unique reference number: 140314

Principal: Teri Goodinson

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Beaminster St Mary's is a smaller than average size primary school with 143 children on roll. The large majority of children are of a white British heritage and from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The number of children with learning needs and/or disabilities is above the national average as is the proportion eligible for the pupil premium. Attendance is currently below the national average. The school converted to academy status on 1 February 2014 and became part of the diocesan academy trust. The current principal was appointed in April 2014. The school has undergone significant changes in staffing and leadership.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Beaminster St Mary's as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Christian values have greater emphasis and are making an increasing impact on children's learning and wellbeing
- Improvements in collective worship mean that Bible messages have more meaning to the lives of the children.
- The commitment of school leaders contributes to the ongoing development of the distinctive Christian ethos.

Areas to improve

- Revise the school's Christian vision so that it has greater meaning and purpose for all members of the school community.
- Ensure that themes in acts of worship fully reflect the school's new Christian values and provide opportunities for children to take ownership of how they are explored.
- Establish an ethos group that develops the skills and expertise to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's church foundation.

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

Christian values are becoming more prominent in the daily life of the school. Children, for example, know that values are important in a church school because they are based on Bible stories and help teach them how to be better people. They are developing the language through which they can articulate in depth what these values mean to them and how they impact on their own lives. The creation of a vision by the school's senior leaders and managers has helped to give clarity to the school's purpose as a church school. The vision has not yet been shared with the whole school community and specific values have yet to be identified that reflect the vision. Through their links to the school's approach to behaviour, values are making a good contribution to the improved behaviour and the good quality of relationships around the school. Christian values are therefore making an impact on the children's personal development. There are fewer specific links between values and the difference they make to the children's learning. The successful changes towards a more positive culture, in which children's academic attainment is improving, is being embedded and some of the approaches to learning and personal development, for example the behaviour policy, no longer fully reflect these changes. The school has placed greater emphasis on identifying opportunities in the curriculum to promote the social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development of the children. As a consequence, teachers have a clearer understanding of spirituality and are developing explicit opportunities in the curriculum in which children can experience high quality opportunities to reflect. The school is successful in helping children understand the diverse nature of society in modern Britain and around the world. Children are respectful when discussing other faiths and cultures and show a real willingness to learn about and appreciate them.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of worship are regarded by children to be one of the most important ways through which they express the school's Christian ethos. Children explain how collective worship is 'a special time' to 'gather together to hear about God and Jesus' and 'learn from them about how to live' their lives. Children have a good understanding that prayer is an integral part of worship and gives them time to thank God and ask for His help. Worship planning is effective and based on the Leicester Diocese programme which ensures that explicitly Christian values are taught using Bible stories. The headteacher and clergy work closely together to make sure that worship is meaningful and relevant to the lives of the children. Themes, and the messages they give, have not yet been adapted so that they more fully reflect the school's vision or its own values and how they are explored in the context of the school community. Children have good opportunities to pray and reflect in the school day. A special reflection room is available for children to find calm and peace in the school day and write their own prayers. There are also areas in classrooms which children say help them to reflect on their behaviour or school work. Children are developing their understanding of the nature of the Trinity. Older children, for example, are confident to express their views that the Holy Spirit is 'something you might feel in your soul' and could give 'courage to make the right choices'. Children have some involvement in planning and leading worship particularly the celebration of major Christian festivals either in the church or at school. There are fewer opportunities for them to plan and deliver worship on a more regular basis.

The effectiveness of religious education is satisfactory

Standards in RE are improving with an increasing number of children attaining levels that are in line with national expectations by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. Progress is also improving because a recently introduced RE scheme of work has given teachers greater confidence to deliver more exciting lessons that engage children more positively in their learning. This progress has not yet been sustained over time and children are not yet achieving higher levels in RE. Children's work is regularly assessed at the end of each unit and achievement in the knowledge acquired and what children have learned from their studies is levelled. Because the RE scheme has only recently been introduced, there is not sufficient data

from assessments to track children's progress over time and assessment has yet to be moderated to ensure consistency across the school particularly with regard to evaluating what children have learned from their understanding of RE. The use of class RE portfolios to record children's work, often reflecting the enquiry based approach to the subject, provides a valuable evidence of the progress they make. Teaching at its best is characterised by the confident use of skilful questioning that challenges children and encourages them to explore their own ideas and thoughts in greater depth. Children respond well to these opportunities and are keen to engage and share their ideas. These opportunities are not always picked up by teachers. Children have a good knowledge of Christianity and other major religions. They are able to use this knowledge to make links between different faiths and are developing the ability to reflect on what this means to them. Religious education makes a good contribution to the development of the children's SMSC and promotion of the school's Christian values. Leadership of RE is effective and good plans have been put in place to ensure that the new coordinator is prepared for the role.

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

The school's leaders and managers have concentrated on raising standards and ensuring the environment is right for learning. Behaviour is good and learning is improving. At the same time, the headteacher has ensured that the Christian character also moves forward and has been successful in leading the school's senior leaders and managers in reviewing its vision. The headteacher has a good grasp of what needs to be done to continue this process by pulling together recent initiatives so that together they have clearer meaning and purpose for the whole school community. The headteacher's evaluation of the school as a church school is accurate. Actions for further developing the Christian ethos have been identified and are integral to the school's development planning. The headteacher has a good capacity for taking the school forward as a church school. Some effective monitoring has taken place of worship and RE by the headteacher and others. The role of the local advisory board in monitoring and evaluating the impact of Christian distinctiveness is at an early stage. This has been recognised by the leadership who have plans in place to establish an ethos committee. The school has made some progress in addressing the areas for development identified in the previous inspection. Links with the local church have improved significantly and are mutually beneficial. Local clergy are familiar figures in the life of the school and regularly lead acts of worship and make a good contribution to its planning. The church is regarded by children and parents as an important part of the life of the school. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report June 2015 Beaminster St Mary's CE Primary Academy Beaminster DT18 3BY