



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bulford St Leonard's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

John French Way
Bulford Village
Salisbury
Wiltshire SP4 9HP

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: 19 October 2015

Date of last inspection: 4 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 126309

Headteacher: Sarah Ward

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Bulford St Leonard's is an average size primary school with 261 children on roll. The large majority of children are of a white British heritage and from varied socio-economic backgrounds. A high proportion of children come from the nearby military base. The number of children joining or leaving the school other than at usual times is high. The number of children with learning needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. Attendance has improved and is broadly in line with the national average. The school has recently undergone significant changes in staffing, senior leadership and governance.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bulford St Leonard's as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Children speak with confidence and sincerity about matters of faith and belief.
- Relationships are based on explicit Christian values which make an important contribution to the school's Christian ethos.
- Acts of worship enable children to reflect on the impact of Bible stories to their own lives.

Areas to improve

- Develop the use of challenging questioning so that closer links are made between the school's Christian values and the whole curriculum with particular regard to the children's spiritual development.
- Improve the analysis of assessment data in religious education (RE) so that it robustly tracks children's progress and contributes to accurate moderation of achievement.
- Ensure that current systems to monitor school effectiveness include procedures for evaluation of the impact of church school distinctiveness on the welfare and academic achievement of all children.

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

The school's Christian ethos is central to the way that the school community welcomes and cares for the many children who join the school part way through their primary education. An emphasis on ensuring that all groups of children can make good progress in their learning and acquire the skills and knowledge to be successful is a priority. Underpinning this approach is the school's Christian ethos where values make a good contribution to the children's growing personal development and understanding of their place in the world. There is a growing understanding of how explicit Christian values also impact on the children's learning and academic achievement. The development of closer links between these values and the 'learning powers' that help children be good learners is an area that is not yet fully explored. However, current data indicates that overall standards are rising as the school works towards securing attainment that is securely in line with national averages for all groups of children. There are opportunities for children to experience moments that develop spiritual awareness but the school has yet to monitor whether the quality is consistent across the school. Children respond well to these times with enthusiasm and have a genuine delight in their reaction to images of the world around them. The use of challenging questions to encourage children to reflect in greater depth on the impact of these experiences has not been fully embedded throughout the school. Relationships throughout the school are based on kindness and consideration for each other and contribute to an environment in which children feel safe and confident to express their views on matters of faith and belief openly knowing that their opinions will be listened to with respect by others. Explicit Christian values and opportunities for spiritual development make a good contribution to the children's growing awareness of the diversity of faiths and cultures in this country and around the world. They have a good understanding of the difference between right from wrong and a keen sense of justice that reflects the values that underpin British society. The school is successful in caring for the welfare of all children and their families whether they are established members of the community or those who have recently arrived.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The impact of acts of worship is good because themes that are explicitly based on values, and explored through Bible stories, make a difference to the lives of children and adults in the school community. Children and their parents explain how worship themes influence the decisions they make both at school and at home. Further links between what the children have learnt in worship and their class lessons, particularly in RE, reinforce the messages given. Collective worship is a special part of the school day and includes elements that make them distinct times that give children opportunities to think about God and pray. Children have a good understanding of this and appreciate that worship is an integral aspect of being a church school. They have a clear grasp that prayers can be said to say thank you for food and the natural world as well as for family and friendship. They are developing their understanding that a variety of different types of prayer can support them at different times in their lives but there is more that could be done to raise awareness of a range of prayers. However, when discussing the impact of prayer and the relationship with God and Jesus through prayer, both young and older children show considerable maturity in their thoughts. They have good opportunities to develop their understanding of the nature of the Trinity and are confident to explore and share their views on what this means to them. Through regular class worship, children have good opportunities to plan and lead acts of worship that are specifically based on the school's values. Children's involvement in planning and evaluating worship has improved since the previous inspection. Regular reviews of worship, posted on the school website, show that children can evaluate the impact of worship messages on their own lives. A collective worship club, run by the vicar, has contributed to improvements in the worship programme. The celebration of major Christian festivals contributes to the children's growing understanding of Anglican tradition. Although the parish church is relatively small to hold whole school worship, the school and church are committed to maintaining and strengthening bonds between the two communities. Each class visits the church for special services.

The effectiveness of religious education is satisfactory

Standards are rising in religious education and children's attainment is moving towards being securely in line with national expectations for their age. To achieve this, children are making at least expected progress in RE. This is evident in the children's work and how they are increasingly using a secure knowledge of RE to learn from their studies. Regular assessments record children's achievements in RE but data gathered is not analysed so that it more clearly tracks the progress of all groups of children as they move through the school and identify future improvements. Teaching of RE is confident with the effective use of questioning that challenges pupils to think more deeply about their learning. At times opportunities are missed where pupils learning could have been enriched by exploring concepts in greater depth particularly where they could link to the school's values and ethos. Children respond positively to RE and engage in their learning with a keen interest and willingness to share their views and opinions. Some of the very youngest children, for example, responded with a real sense of wonder when shown images of God's creation and then explored through a good range of activities what this meant to them. Children spontaneously refer to the school's values, such as endeavour, in their learning. This is particularly so with older children. For example, when discussing inspirational people, one child explained how perseverance helped Helen Keller to be successful in her life. Where appropriate these discussions are then linked to themes from collective worship. In this way, RE makes a good contribution to the promotion of the school's Christian ethos. Children have a secure grasp of Christianity and other world faiths for their age ranges and the school tries hard to try and give them opportunities to experience them at first hand. The RE leader has a good understanding of the RE syllabus and awareness of latest developments in the subject. Interviews with children have enabled her to identify what they like about the subject and their views on how it can be improved. These form part of an effective action plan some of which have been monitored and evaluated.

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

The headteacher has ensured that the development of the school's Christian ethos remains a priority at the same time as the school is addressing other important school improvement needs. This is a reflection of the commitment given by the headteacher and other leaders and managers to the promotion of church school distinctiveness. The school has made progress since the previous inspection in developing this ethos and has, for example, addressed the areas for development identified in the last report. Self-evaluation as a church school is accurate and the headteacher and key members of staff and governors have a good grasp of what needs to be done to continue to develop as a church school. The leadership therefore has a good capacity to lead the school to improve further as a church school. The school has significantly improved procedures to monitor and evaluate its overall effectiveness and performance. Leadership and management is not yet good because systems to specifically measure the impact of its church distinctiveness on children's welfare and academic achievement are not yet highly developed particularly with regard to the regular involvement of all governors. The vicar makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. She is involved in monitoring through interviews with children and liaises with the RE leader to discuss developments in this subject and collective worship. Outcomes of feedback from children have been fed back to the governing body but the overall monitoring system is not yet sufficiently rigorous to robustly identify future improvements. Parents support the school's Christian ethos and understand that its values are a reflection of church school distinctiveness and linked through collective worship to Biblical themes. They appreciate that the school encourages their children to make up their own minds about faith and belief and feel that the school has the right approach in how they achieve this. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report October 2015 Bulford St Leonard's CE VA Primary School Salisbury SP4 9HP