



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Littlemoor Road, Preston, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 6AA

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Date of inspection: 4 December 2015

Date of last inspection: 13 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 113835

Head teacher: Vanessa Lucas Inspector's name and number: Carole McCormack (224)

School context

The catchment area of the school is ranked within the 20% most deprived areas of the UK and the context of the school is complex, aspects of which include: high mobility – especially amongst the higher attainers in Y6; fluctuating attainment on entry; intensive support for some families; and an increasing number of children with disabilities and those who have special educational needs. The school is a member of the Chesil Education Partnership which embraces self-improvement through mutual support and continuing professional development. St Andrew's is a Rights Respecting level 2 school and actively works with schools in Kenya, focussing on global citizenship. The school was inspected by Ofsted in late September 2015 and the school was deemed to require improvement.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's as a Church of England school are good

- The ability of the children to clearly articulate their own reasoned beliefs and to evaluate respectfully the opinion of others
- The dedication and resilience of the staff team to do the very best personally, spiritually and academically for each child in their care
- The strength of the school community as a Christian community

Areas to improve

- For all stakeholders to revisit the many Christian values which underpin provision and to identify the core, non-negotiable, values of the school and seek ways to use these agreed values to support children academically.
- For staff, children and governors to reach a shared understanding of spirituality; and to introduce a structured way for each learner to develop their own personal spirituality.
- For governors to review how they monitor the Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school through their work with children

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

The vision of the school is for all children 'To live and live splendidly' (John 10.10). Christian values are lived out within the school community and inform relationships; and from these stem the deep care for each child and for each other. Reflecting the schools vision for all to

'To live and live splendidly' carefully monitoring of the learning of each individual learner is in place to identify the type of support or intervention required to meet the diverse and complex needs of each learner. The support for the individual learner naturally encompasses their personal development and well-being and extends to effective support and interventions for the family. Parents appreciate this deeply, describing the school as 'the hub of the community'. They know that their children are 'treated with respect' and 'understood and cared for here'. This individualised approach is applied to attendance also and this is steadily improving through the rigorous application of the measures adopted by the educational partnership to which the school belongs. A parent prayer group meets in school and one parent explained how she was personally supported by a member of staff when she suffered bereavement. The Christian values threaded through provision also provide a secure moral standpoint for the children, giving them an outstanding capacity to empathise with the values of other faiths. Children are articulate and thoughtful, and show great maturity when listening and contributing to a faith discussion. One child was passionate about the need to 'honour the belief' of those who follow religions other than Christianity. Another child asked the question 'What is normal?' when discussing faith traditions. The school is a Rights Respecting level 2 school and this provides a firm structure upon which the spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding of learners is constructed. The school augments this structure by many ad hoc opportunities for children to deepen their own spirituality through reflections upon life, the values of the school, relationships and inspirational moments. However, the school has not developed a way in which the children can bring together these reflective insights into a cohesive whole, in order to develop their personal spirituality. The children are excited and engaged by the close links between their school and Kenyan schools; and the reality of Christianity as a global faith has been actively explored by them through the visits of staff to their partner school in Kenya and reciprocal visits from Kenya to St. Andrew's. Children do not view their learning in Religious Education in isolation. One child expressed this by exclaiming that 'Religion is everywhere!' In 2014 at KS2 the school exceeded national expectations in Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Spelling Grammar and Punctuation, although progress in Reading fell below national levels. 2015, however, saw standards decline in Writing and Mathematics. Despite improvements the recent Ofsted Inspection deemed that teaching, learning and pupil attainment is not consistently good enough and so the Christian character of the school is not yet outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Children and adults engage with and value worship highly. As a result worship is tailored to the needs of the children and the context of the school, children's behaviour is attentive and responsive and they are able to recall instances of the impact that worship has had on their lives. One child explained how he understood that he 'had choices' after collective worship had explored the theme of honesty. Another that she understood God's 'love and care' through considering the Christmas and Easter stories. Parents appreciate worship deeply and one described how 'it is a public acknowledgement of the founding principles of the school and brings everyone together as a community.' Planning follows the church year, celebrating the major Christian festivals and exploring twelve Christian values in turn on a half-termly basis over a period of two years. Throughout worship there is an emphasis on Bible teaching, each value being introduced by the local leader of the Baptist church and placed within its theological context. Learners are encouraged to celebrate through dance, song and drama; and the school has started to hold whole school creative celebrations of key festivals – such as Pentecost, funded by the Parent Teacher Association. A pilgrimage takes place on St Andrew's day, led by children in Years 5 and 6, from the school to St Andrew's church. New parents and children participate in the pilgrimage, stopping along the route to reflect and pray. Prayer and reflection are intrinsic parts of daily life. Children are free to visit the reflection areas in each classroom during the school day and are encouraged to record their thoughts in prayer books and in diaries of reflection. The latter can remain private at the wish of the child and are not, therefore, used to evaluate the impact of worship on the lives of the individual learners. This is undertaken formally, through questionnaires, through the work of the worship council and

informally, through contact between governors and children. However, there is no shared understanding of Spirituality amongst all stakeholders; and no single powerful structured way for each individual learner to develop their own personal spirituality. The highly experienced collective worship leader shares her planning with staff and the local and visiting clergy who lead worship. Children are confident to lead worship and recently a local team have brought 'Open the Book' to the school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

A very robust approach has been taken by the school to the leadership of Religious Education; a review of the scheme of work; and the quality of teaching and learning. The subject leader works closely with the collective worship leader, in order to ensure appropriate links and correspondences between the Christian values and themes explored in worship and in subject teaching and learning. A 'St Andrew's Scheme of Work' has been established which takes aspects of the Dorset Agreed syllabus, 'What if?' learning and the exploration of 'Big Questions' through the format of Philosophy for Children. One child enthusiastically described this searching approach as 'taking a question and going in deeper'. Godly play; a range of visits; and close work with the local churches, have all been included within the revised scheme. The subject development plan has as its focus during the current academic year an evaluation of the effectiveness of this new scheme of work. Children engage in a wide range of creative opportunities in order to express their learning and their faith understanding; these creative outcomes are then carefully assessed and moderated by the RE leader and her colleagues. Because of this inclusive approach, children's achievement in RE is above that of the other core subjects. Teaching and learning observed in the inspection was at least good and this is reflected in the monitoring of teaching in general.

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

The Headteacher is a dedicated and passionate advocate for the children in her care and brings alive equality, inclusion and mutual support within her school. As a consequence of the school's openness and readiness to serve, relationships with the community and local churches are very strong. Parents deeply appreciate the Headteacher's caring approachability and the 'prayerful governance' which 'brings God into the equation.' Evaluation and strategic planning (a review of which was the second focus for development in the last denominational inspection) are driven by the school vision to enrich and affirm the lives of each learner. There has, however, been no recent rigorous review of the core Christian values of the school, which would enable these to be clearly aligned with the articles comprising the school's Rights Respecting level 2 award. All governors, whether foundation governors or not, share information about the Christian distinctiveness of the school and its effectiveness at full governing body meetings; and they monitor primarily through informal discussion with the children (the first point for development in the last denominational inspection). A particularly powerful example of this is the presence of a foundation governor at the school breakfast club, where she supports and encourages the children at the start of their school day. However ways of sharing and recording outcomes of discussions with children in order to feed into monitoring processes are not yet rigorous enough. Effective professional development is undertaken within the Chesil partnership, including diocesan input. Arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report December 2015 St Andrew's VA Primary School, Preston, Weymouth. DT3 6AA