



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Saint Bartholomew's Church of England VC First School

Kithill, Crewkerne, Somerset. TA18 8AS

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: **Somerset**

Date of inspection: **5th November 2015**

Date of last inspection: **7th October 2010**

School's unique reference number: **123750**

Headteacher: **David Carter**

Inspector's name and number: **Steve Ford 764**

School context

St. Bartholomew's has 189 pupils on roll, who come from predominantly White British families. The school is located in a semi-rural setting. In the last 5 years the school has undergone a number of changes in headteacher, together with the process of federation and the process of de-federation in April 2015, therefore two changes of school governing body. During this time the school has managed to keep a consistent standard of achievement and its Christian distinctiveness. Ofsted 2012 judged the school as Good. The percentage of pupils with Special Educational Needs is below national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Saint Bartholomew's First School as a Church of England school are good.

- There are good relationships within the school, based on Christian values
- Children are confident in expressing their views and speak about their relationship with God and how this affects the way they behave toward each other
- The revised collective worship programme clearly links the themes to learners' everyday lives, which encourages their understanding
- All children are valued as unique individuals, encouraged to succeed and are making good progress academically, socially and spiritually

Areas to improve

- Now the school is de-federated, revisit the school ethos and vision statement with the school community and articulate a clear Christian vision by involving all stakeholders
- Deepen children's understanding of Christianity as a world faith and knowledge of other world faiths by providing concrete multi-faith, multi-cultural opportunities.

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

This inclusive Church school, through its Christian character supports children's well-being and encourages good behaviour and progress. As a result children are well behaved and cooperative. They are confident to ask questions and challenge things they believe are against the school's Christian values or Golden Rules. They are able to express how these Golden Rules affect their daily lives and their interactions. The rules are referred to in collective worship and linked to Christian values such as compassion and forgiveness. All children achieve well and grow in confidence as they progress through the school. This is because staff value them as individuals and monitor their progress well, ensuring that all pupils' needs are met. The school deals well with attendance issues in a Christian manner, supporting parents to improve attendance. There are no exclusions. The children report that they enjoy religious education (RE) and collective worship and value the experiences as part of their daily lives. As a result they readily engage in discussion about God and the Christian way of life. The Christian character of the school supports children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, giving them the confidence to question things and attempt challenging tasks. Through the RE programme, based on the locally agreed syllabus, children are aware that Christianity is a multicultural world faith. The school has visits from other local Christian denominations in the area. The global aspect could be developed further in order to prepare pupils for the multicultural, multi-faith society in which they are living. The school could be more explicit in the way it articulates its Christian values and it could work more closely with the Church and other stakeholders, to improve how it measures the impact of its Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has an increasingly positive impact on the lives of children. The new Ethos group, consisting of the headteacher, incumbent and a Foundation governor, have developed themes that are relevant to the children and related to the SEAL programme. Collective worship has an important place in the life of the school; however not all staff attend collective worship at the same time, as some groups of staff and pupils use this as supplementary planning meeting and teaching time. There is some evaluation of collective worship and it has had some positive impact. For instance the collective worship programme is much more themed, cohesive and relevant. This could be developed further with specific focus identified for evaluation and this could be more systematic, targeted and involve more stakeholders, including children. Children recognise the value of Christian worship and report that they enjoy the experience; this is because they take an active part in worship. They are enthusiastic and engaged. Biblical material is used and related to the Golden Rules and everyday life through child based scenarios. This includes the teachings of Jesus, when children are asked to think and reflect on how he would react to moral dilemmas. The school collective worship assistants are able to explain the Anglican tradition of liturgical colours and significance of artefacts such as candle and cross, demonstrating their understanding. They have opportunities to lead particular aspects of collective worship, including planned intercessional prayers. Collective worship is often led by visitors to the school, such as members of the local Church community and other denominational worship leaders, as well as charities and other organisations. This offers a varied programme of worship. The themes of collective worship are reinforced throughout the school with the provision of classroom reflection books and through related curriculum lessons and the SEAL programme. To give opportunities for spiritual development and reflection, there are areas in each classroom, a prayer wall in the school hall and an outside quiet reflective area. However it was not clear how frequently these facilities were accessed. Prayer is becoming more central to the life of the school, each class having its class prayer and collection of prayers. As a result children are able to talk about prayer being a dialogue with God. Children's awareness of the Christian concept of the Trinity is developing; they recognise that there is a relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son and are beginning to have an understanding of the Holy Spirit.

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

The school has undergone a significant period of management reorganisation, but has maintained a consistent approach to its Christian distinctiveness. In the light of the de-federation it could now more clearly develop and articulate its Christian vision involving all stakeholders. Christian values are implicit and are seen in action in the life of the school and in all relationships. The impact of these values could now be made more explicit. The RE and collective worship programmes support pupils' good behaviour and relationships within the school and the leadership are cognisant of this. Parents, the Church and wider community play a significant part in school life, which has expanded the learning experiences for children. There are clear links between the Church and the school, for the mutual benefit of both. For example, Foundation Governors are involved in collective worship planning and delivery and the church building is used for significant celebrations of Christian festivals and as a venue for 'Leavers Service' in the summer. Parents speak well of the school and its communication with them. They support it well through the parents' association. The leaders of collective worship and RE are given good support in fulfilling their roles and this has enabled them to bring about improvements in RE delivery and planning of collective worship, giving them a high priority within the school. Whilst the school provides good local awareness it could be more proactive in promoting a more global awareness of Christianity and other cultures, preparing the children for a life in multi-faith and multi-cultural Britain. Currently the children's multicultural awareness is experienced through the locally agreed syllabus, 'Awareness Mystery and Value'. The school has made use of diocesan training for governors and staff. Staff training on collective worship has been attended by some and cascaded to all staff. The leader of collective worship is currently attending a church school management course. This is evidence that the school invests in its staff and their development as church school leaders. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders identified the school as at least good in all areas and after discussion and review of evidence the SIAMS inspection concurs with its assessment. The school has essentially satisfied the points for development set at the last inspection but these need to be further embedded. Governors are much more aware and involved in evaluating the Christian ethos and character of the school.

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