



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Sherborne Abbey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lenthay Road
Sherborne
Dorset
DT9 6AQ

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Date of inspection: 23 June 2016

Date of last inspection: July 2011

School's unique reference number: 113766

Headteacher: Ann-Marie Kampf

Inspector's name and number: Marcia Headon 761

School context

Sherborne Abbey is an average size primary school of 275 pupils aged between four and eleven. It is situated in the town of Sherborne and has long standing links with the Abbey. The pupils come mainly from the immediate local area but a percentage come from Yeovil and the surrounding villages. The majority of children are of white British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is above the national average but the proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average. Since the previous inspection there has been a new headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school is in the process of exploring joining a multi-academy trust in 2017.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sherborne Abbey Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Deeply embedded Christian values have a highly positive impact upon the personal and academic development of pupils and their well-being.
- Collective worship underpins and extends the school's Christian ethos and pupils' spiritual development and gives them excellent opportunities for reflection.
- Long established connections with Sherborne Abbey and the excellent support it provides enhances the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for younger pupils to explore and explain the links between Christian values and Bible stories in greater depth so that they understand their relevance to their daily lives more clearly.
- Develop opportunities for pupils from all year groups to join the pupil worship group so that they can be involved in the planning and leading of whole school collective worship.
- Develop pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith so that they learn to embrace and celebrate diversity further.

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

The school takes exceptional care to meet the needs of its pupils, which it does very well. This is firmly rooted in Christian values which are strongly embedded, explored in collective worship and religious education (RE) and followed by all members of the school community. Pupils know the values very well and understand what they mean in practice. For example, they show the Christian value of 'responsibility' by acting as playground buddies, reading to younger pupils or by demonstrating thankfulness for their lives by helping those less fortunate than themselves through charity events. Older pupils make close links between Biblical teaching and the values, but younger pupils are less confident in recalling the Bible stories which show the links, although they do know them. The values are prominently and imaginatively displayed around the school and on the website and parents confirm that they have a significant impact as they are not only important to pupils when in school, but also at home. In 2015 a higher proportion of children attained better than the national average expected levels in all core subjects and disadvantaged children, in receipt of additional funding, did equally well as their peers. At Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics almost all children made the progress expected nationally and in writing all did so. This is a direct result of the Christian love, responsibility and perseverance all teachers show towards the pupils' learning. A parent support worker and teaching assistants trained in emotional support show the Christian values of compassion and care in the support they give to pupils. Relationships in the school are excellent. There is a very strong sense of trust and teamwork between everyone. School is seen by the pupils as a fun place to be where all feel respected and totally safe. The Christian values impact directly on behaviour, which is outstanding. The recent introduction of Restorative Justice is entirely in keeping with the values of the school and pupils are given opportunities to reflect on any disagreements or poor behaviour and to consider whether this is in line with the teachings of Jesus. They appreciate that forgiveness is sometimes very difficult and Christian teaching about forgiveness is sometimes hard to follow. Pupils' spiritual development is carefully planned for across the curriculum. As they progress in the school their spiritual awareness deepens, and they ask searching questions and give detailed explanations appropriate for their age. The recently opened spiritual garden is very highly valued by both pupils and staff as an area for quiet reflection and prayer and is treated with the utmost respect. The school has addressed the issue from the previous inspection to help pupils understand religious and cultural diversity. Religious education makes a major contribution to this through work on Islam, Judaism and Hinduism and visitors talking about other faiths. However, pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world faith is less well understood. The school is highly inclusive and pupils show respect and tolerance to those of other faiths and none. Religious education is seen as an important subject in the school. It is well led by the coordinator. Two teaching assistants contribute to planning which enhances the quality of support they give in the classroom. Religious education is planned carefully and lessons are imaginative and exciting as well as setting high expectations. A Year 5 lesson on perceptions of Islam was very demanding but all pupils contributed very well to the discussions.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is outstanding because of its impact on the pupils and the enjoyment and reverence with which it is treated. Collective worship is a special time in the life of the school as pupils know it is the time when they gather together to pray, praise, reflect and learn together about the teachings of Jesus. They look forward to collective worship and see it as being totally relevant to their lives. Having heard the story of Ruth and Naomi they talked about how friendship seemed more important to them than before. Pupils explain how Bible stories, such as the parable of the workers in the vineyard, indicate to them that everyone is of equal value and justice is important. Pupils particularly enjoy Open the Book led by teams from Sherborne Abbey and are enthralled by the stories being acted out. The format of collective worship introduces pupils to simple Anglican liturgy with Christian greetings, responses, blessings, prayers and Bible stories all of which help them to reflect on the significance of Christianity to

their own lives and extends their understanding of the traditions of the Anglican church. An effective focal point for worship is the use of a prayer table with candle and a true sense of reverence and quiet reflection is created by the use of music and pictures. Music is a strong feature of worship and it is carefully chosen to match the theme. Pupils join in singing enthusiastically. Worship is very carefully planned by the worship coordinator with the headteacher and local assistant priest. It is largely centred around the school's values. Christian festivals and other special events are celebrated. A small worship group of Year 6 pupils helps with the planning of whole school worship but other year groups are not yet involved with this. Pupils play a greater role in leading class worship which deepens their understanding of prayer and worship. Prayer plays an important part in the life of the school. Pupils understand the purpose of prayer to Christians and say that 'you can pray anywhere' and about anything. The Lord's Prayer is well known and used regularly. Boards or crosses in each classroom, displaying the relevant value of the week are used very effectively by children to place prayers they have written. These are used at the end of each day in their final reflections before they go home. The evaluation of the impact of collective worship is particularly strong. Both the act of worship and its impact are evaluated by pupils, staff and governors and issues arising are acted upon immediately.

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

The headteacher and governors' vision that every child matters to God underpins the ethos of the school. The headteacher sets high expectations that Christian values will be lived out and challenges any action which does not reflect the Christian values. The mission statement has been revised since the previous inspection to ensure it includes the whole school community and to reinforce the importance of the Christian values. The school evaluates its Christian distinctiveness carefully and regularly and its self-evaluation is accurate and identifies further improvements. Collective worship and RE are carefully monitored by middle and senior leaders and all staff know they have a responsibility to foster the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They are regular visitors, contribute to many areas of the curriculum and have helped with the design of the spiritual garden. They take their roles extremely conscientiously and are continually seeking to improve the school through their development plans. They attend regular training run either by the Diocesan Board or with the local consortium of schools. Links with Sherborne Abbey have been strengthened since the previous inspection. Teams from there make a huge contribution, for example providing Open the Book, developing an Easter Experience in the Abbey, visiting or acting as readers in collective worship. Pupils visit the Abbey and local churches regularly and local clergy are such regular visitors to the school that the pupils see them as integral to school life providing extra support to pupils and school life. Parents are highly supportive of the school and appreciate the approachability of staff and the care, love and compassion which they show to their children especially those with any special needs. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report June 2016 Sherborne Abbey Primary Sherborne Dorset DT9 6AQ