



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Bishop Bronescombe Church of England Primary School**

Boscoppa Road

St Austell

Cornwall PL25 3DT

**Previous SIAS grade: not previously inspected as an academy**

**Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Truro**

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 7 July 2016

Date of last inspection: N/A

School's unique reference number: 140465

Executive principal: Mark Lees

Head of school: Katie Dalton

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

#### **School context**

Bishop Bronescombe is larger than the average size primary school with 360 children including 48 in the nursery. They come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds from the local community. Nearly all children are from a white British heritage. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the number entitled to receive the pupil premium. Attendance is above the national average. The school converted to academy status in December 2013 when it became a member of a Church of England multi academy trust (MAT) with four other church schools. The MAT is led by an executive principal who joined in September 2015. A head of school was appointed in December 2013. The parish church is based in the school.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Bronescombe as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- Children reflect on matters of faith and belief in considerable depth which enhances their understanding of Christian values and the impact they make.
- Christian values have a significant impact on the high quality of relationships that underpin the children's positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the Christian ethos continually develops so that it has meaning and purpose to all members of the school community.

#### **Areas to improve**

Empower children and adults in the school community to take direction of their own spiritual development by:

- Providing high quality opportunities for children to explore their growing spirituality in greater depth across all areas of the curriculum.
- Creating innovative ways to record and assess evidence of the children's understanding of religious education (RE) and its impact on their spiritual awareness.
- Ensuring that all members of the school community have opportunities to participate in the mutual growth of spirituality throughout the life of the school.

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

Christian values are used as part of the everyday language of the school community to help children with their learning and in their personal development. They are integral to teaching and the approach to managing behaviour. They make a significant impact on the quality of the children's lives in school and outside of it. This is reflected in the academic progress that children make to achieve standards at least in line with expectations and in their ability to apply values to their everyday lives. For example, children explain how they need courage to confront challenges in their lessons and need perseverance to achieve them. They readily relate values to Bible stories to help support their understanding of them and do so with knowledge and conviction. Some children are growing in confidence to explore links between values by discussing whether Bible stories have more than one meaning and are open to interpretation. Children talk about how they use values outside of school because 'they can be used everywhere'. One child explained that respect is something 'you have to take with you around the world' to appreciate differences in religions and cultures. The school has made good progress towards articulating a shared understanding of spirituality. In particular, older children are confident to explore its meaning and explain what it means to them. One child's view that 'spiritual development has helped me to discover my inner self and what I can achieve' is a typical comment and reflect the depth of maturity of their understanding. Opportunities for children to engage in spiritual experiences are excellent and they respond with enthusiasm and an appropriate seriousness to reflection. The recent introduction of 'Spiritual Searchers' is an outstanding innovation and an excellent example of an approach to learning that places an emphasis on children to explore and direct their own personal spiritual journey. This is still at an early stage and its potential to enhance the depth of learning across the wider curriculum and all age groups has not yet been fully explored. Children have an excellent grasp of right from wrong and show a commitment to justice and 'being fair to everyone' regardless of background. They have a good understanding that Britain is a diverse society and say that the range of religions they learn about in RE helps them to appreciate others.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The impact of collective worship is outstanding because of the depth of the children's reflections on the difference that Christian values make to their own lives. They say that acts of worship make them 'feel closer to God'. Children explain how worship gives them examples from the life of Jesus that helps 'show how we can use the values' to 'make the right choices'. They refer to the Trinity to help explain how to resolve moral dilemmas involving choices. For example, younger children have an impressive appreciation of how the Holy Spirit 'guides you through your life and gets you through difficult times'. They openly share their opinions that 'God is in my heart' and they know this because 'He talks to you'. Acts of worship provide a wide range of opportunities to explore the meaning of faith. Children articulate their thoughts and beliefs with confidence and conviction while also listening to and respecting the views of others. The recent introduction of a collective worship blog, in response to feedback from children and parents, is giving children an opportunity to express their views and values that parents can follow. Collective worship is thoroughly planned around themes based on the school's explicit core Christian values that are closely related to Bible stories. Because each value is linked to a specific Bible story, children have a good knowledge of the life of Jesus and His teachings. Children have an excellent understanding of prayer and how reflection helps

them to think about God and 'share my worries with Him'. They appreciate that prayers are not a 'wish list' but can bring comfort or give courage in times of need for yourself or others. Children are involved in planning and evaluating acts of worship in a number of ways. The worship team, comprising Year 6 children, is taking increasing responsibility for planning and leading worship on a regular basis. They contribute to feedback through their evaluations which are fed back to members of staff. Senior leaders and governors all contribute to the regular monitoring and evaluation of worship and action points arising from these are an integral part of the overall school improvement plan.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Children respond well to their RE lessons and engage with enthusiasm in their work. Learning has an emphasis on exploration of religious concepts and children use good subject knowledge to support them when carrying challenging enquiries. When encouraged to express their views and opinions, children do so in considerable depth which enhances the quality of their learning. Children are able to do this because opportunities for them to reflect are part of their learning. For example, Spiritual Searchers seek out high quality thoughts and ideas from children as evidence of the depth of their understanding and their ability to make sense of it personally. These high quality responses are not always captured in the children's books or in the class floor books that record the children's work in RE. This means that some of the children's quality learning is not available to inform progress and the standards that they are capable of achieving. The school has introduced a new assessment system for RE in response to changes in the national curriculum. Regular assessments are undertaken which are evaluated against age related expectations which the school has adapted from the RE syllabus. This is at an early stage of development. Some moderation of the accuracy of assessment has taken place within the school but a wider sample across the MAT has not been undertaken. Scrutiny of children's work shows that they achieve standards at least in line with national expectations and make good progress in acquiring knowledge and applying it. Religious education makes an important contribution to the children's understanding of values and teachers are skilful at weaving them into the content of the lesson. The introduction of Godly Play into RE has helped to link Bible stories to the school's values as well as giving children opportunities to reflect and respond to those stories in an individual way. Children say that they enjoy these times and value them because they offer them 'a different sort of learning'.

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

The school's distinctive vision has developed since the appointment of the executive principal who has brought greater cohesion across the MAT by setting high expectations of what it means to be church school. Senior leaders at Bishop Bronescombe have fully embraced this and have made good progress in deepening the impact of core Christian values and the place of collective worship and RE in promoting them. The head of school works closely with other senior leaders, including the RE leader, to ensure that the Christian ethos is regularly monitored and that evaluations are accurate. The school has an excellent grasp of its strengths as a church school and a clear understanding of how it can continue to develop. It is also aware that innovations, such as the Spiritual Searchers, can be shared with the MAT to enhance practice across all five schools. Moreover, ideas such as this have yet to be shared with the wider school community to provide opportunities for all stakeholders to engage in the school's spiritual growth. The sharing of ideas is one of the strengths of the MAT and a particular strength of the Christian ethos committee which includes members of the local governing board and MAT directors, which is becoming more effective as its expertise and confidence develops. The school has excellent relationships with the diocese whose support and advice has been an important part of the school's successful improvement as a church school. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

