



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Old Road,
Writhlington,
Radstock BA3 3NG

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Bath and North East Somerset

Dates of inspection: 13 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 21 June 2011

School's unique reference number: 109212

Headteacher: Sue Jones and Cathie Lampert

Inspector's name and number: David Hatrey 844

School context

St Mary's Church of England Primary School and Nursery is smaller than average, with 141 children on roll. The number of children in receipt of Pupil Premium funding is significantly above average. The number of children with English as an additional language is currently 10, representing 12% of the school population. The number with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is 28, 24% of the school population. There is joint leadership at the school, with a shared headship responsibility.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School Writhlington as a Church of England school are good.

- The Christian values make a good contribution to the quality of relationships across the school as well as to the attitudes and behaviour of the children.
- Leaders are enthusiastic, dedicated to children being successful and committed to Christian values ensuring pupils are well prepared for being responsible citizens.
- Effective teaching about prayer means children have a good understanding of the nature of prayer and are confident to use it for themselves.

Areas to improve

- Involve children to a greater extent in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship so they develop ownership of worship creating themes which inspire.
- Extend the school's current monitoring systems to evaluate the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness and spirituality for the children so that this leads to ongoing improvements.
- Develop children's understanding of the school's Christian distinctiveness so that they understand that the care and support is given because the school believes that they are special to God.

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

St. Mary's recently reviewed its core Christian values and adopted trust, respect, friendship, justice, perseverance and truth as well as 6 others. These are being effectively woven into school life with children having a greater ownership. Children have a growing understanding of values and can explain what they look like in daily life, relating these to Bible stories. Many children are able to give examples where these have influenced their actions. Children recognise that these values create a safe, caring ethos. However, children do not yet articulate that care and support are given because they are special to God, made in his image. At present not all of the values have been explored so the full impact has yet to be realised nor is the school's Christian distinctiveness fully understood by all. Therefore, the grade cannot be better than good at this time. Staff reward children where they see them using any of the values, so children are reminded of them. Values make a good contribution to the quality of relationships within the school, with staff leading by example. Bullying and name calling are rare because children respect one another. There has been a significant improvement in behaviour since the last inspection. The school's character is reflected in the care and challenge it provides for each child to be successful and achieve their potential. Data suggests that children have made good progress by the time they leave the school, despite the fact that many begin below national expectations. The school's ethos is effective in raising aspirations, so they develop good attitudes to learning. Provision for spirituality has developed in recent years. Time is given for children to reflect on a variety of learning experiences, recording their thoughts and feelings supported by positive guidance. Evidence from discussions and written notes indicate a growing maturity, where children recognise how this can help them. Religious education (RE) is well planned with good progression. It contributes to children's understanding of the values, considering what Jesus taught about forgiveness for example. These provide opportunities to explore moral issues, such as considering whether they should always forgive. Children are able to recognise the values in others and in different contexts and say how they influence people's actions. Knowledge of other world faiths is good, children were confident to compare religious beliefs, identifying similarities and differences, informing their own opinions. They show respect and tolerance for those who have different ideas.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective worship has a central role in the life of the school. A focus table with symbols and thoughtful music show that this is a special time for children to share with God. Children enjoy the worship when they contribute through drama and singing. Planning for worship is much more detailed than in previous years. Each week a different aspect of the current value is explored in depth with an emphasis upon how this relates to daily life. Children understand that the values are related to Jesus' teaching, showing how He would want us to live. Messages are clear, they challenge children's ideas considering what they would do in different situations. Some children indicate how these influence their thoughts and actions. There are opportunities for children to reflect upon these values in class where ideas are followed up. Discussions and written comments show children are wrestling with ideas forming their own beliefs. Children contribute to celebrating Christian festivals through music, prayer and drama and have a sound understanding of their significance. Prayer is seen by children as a way of sharing with God. The youngest children confidently write thank you prayers. Effective teaching about the Lord's prayer enables children to have a good understanding of the different parts, which children are beginning to use. They pray for the needs of others and respond to recent incidents. Some children indicate how prayer helps them. Most classes have a reflection/ prayer area in addition to the main display. Children use these spaces to write prayers or share their worries placing these into the box knowing they will have a response. Knowledge of Jesus was good, children talk about His life and teaching with some accuracy and His importance to them. There is an emerging understanding of the Trinity. There have been developments in worship, such as a greater emphasis on Christian values. This has not always been informed by monitoring, which

has taken place, but lacked the rigour to lead to ongoing changes. At present children do not plan, lead or evaluate worship.

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

The joint leadership of the school is committed to the care and development of the children. Their vision for the school is one where there is an atmosphere where children have high expectations believing that they can be successful, living in a community based upon Christian values which they experience for themselves. They have raised children's attitudes to learning, celebrating their achievements across a range of areas. Together they have built a cohesive team which works well, taking a lead in enriching a varied curriculum. The leadership team has a growing vision for the school based upon distinct Christian values and use these to nurture relationships and personal well being. They ensure that there is good support to create a curriculum underpinned by these Christian values. Their involvement has seen some initiatives completed in both RE and collective worship, which have made an impact upon the children. An example of this would be where the values are explored in relation to Jesus' teaching in RE and developed further in worship. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. The school's Christian distinctiveness is reflected in its pro-active involvement with parents, developing strong relationships and trust. Significant time is devoted to support parents becoming involved in their child's education, raising expectations. Support is secured from outside agencies for families which makes a significant impact on children's lives. A number of interventions are in place to meet a diverse range of needs with skilled staff who accelerate progress and raise self esteem. Monitoring of children's academic progress is effective with actions well matched to particular needs. However, these do not consider the impact which the school's Christian distinctiveness has upon children, nor the children's understanding of the values and spirituality. There are development plans in place, but these are not informed by observations or discussions involving all stakeholders. The school has drawn upon diocesan expertise well, using advisers to help them consider their Christian values and supporting school leaders at all levels. The church is active in school, despite the absence of a vicar, making a positive contribution, particularly through its foundation governors, who promote celebrating festivals and the Open the Book team. Parents feel that they are welcome in school and that their ideas are important, they believe that the school works hard to meet the needs of their children. The community values the school's involvement in activities, in some of which it plays a leading part.

SIAMS report June 2016 St. Mary's CE VC Primary School Writhlington Radstock BA3 3NG