



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School

Ash Walk,
Henstridge,
Templecombe,
Somerset
BA8 0QD

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 21st April, 2016

Date of last inspection: 5th April 2011

School's unique reference number: 123760

Headteacher: Alison Shearer

Inspector's name and number: John Angle NS119

School context

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school with 97 pupils on roll in four mixed age classes. The school serves the village of Henstridge and the surrounding area. Almost all children are from White British backgrounds. Children are from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding and with special needs is above the national average. The school is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Nicholas Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian character underpins all aspects of school life and learning
- Good behaviour and positive relationships are a result of the school's caring family ethos and attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development
- Outstanding collective worship makes a major contribution to the school's Christian vision, values and ethos
- The mutually beneficial and energising relationship with the local church makes a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the school community

Areas to improve

- Embed systems of monitoring and assessment of the school's Christian character, to stimulate improvement

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

The school's Christian ethos contributes effectively to children's well being, their personal development and their attitudes to learning. Motivated by the Christian values of care and concern, the school seeks to bring out the best in children and effective action is being taken to tackle the areas requiring improvement by Ofsted in December 2014, in order that all children achieve what they are capable of. Children enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. As a result attendance is good. "It's a good place, we all support each other", said one child. Because staff regard each child as a precious individual, made in the image of God, pastoral care is strong; support is given to vulnerable groups and those with social, emotional and educational needs through Family Learning Group and Nurture Groups, to enable them to make good progress. Behaviour and relationships are of the highest standard, because Christian values, for instance forgiveness and respect, impact on the way children learn and play together. Similarly, the school's character and values encourage children to participate in a variety of caring activities within the community, often initiated by the Pupil Voice Council. Opportunities for children to develop and express their spirituality are provided across the curriculum, through art, music, prayers and poetry, in local church services and in school collective worship. Celebrations in the local Anglican church effectively anchor children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the Biblical story, the Christian year and in Christian belief, tradition and practice. The school provides good opportunities for reflection, both indoors and outdoors. One boy commented, "Being in the new quiet library building gives me lots of time to think and be still". In addition, a large natural garden gives children opportunities to reflect on the creative activity of God and to care for their environment. Most children are fully aware that Christianity is a multi cultural world faith and through Religious Education (RE) and other areas of the curriculum they are learning to respect diversity and difference both within the Christian church and in other world religions. The school's RE underpins its Christian character. It is well taught, often using art, drama and music to engage children in their learning and to provide further opportunities for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school now needs to embed systems for monitoring and evaluation of the school's Christian character, to stimulate its development over time.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is highly valued and makes a major contribution to the Christian life, core values and ethos of the school. Children and adults engage fully with worship and can talk about the difference it makes to their lives. It is inclusive, enjoyable and inspirational. As a result they are keen and confident to participate. They sing enthusiastically, join in with learnt responses, play music, take part in drama and give practical support to adult leaders. For instance, in a recent church celebration, 'The Real Meaning of Easter' children presented aspects of the Christian faith in symbols, art and music, and many children demonstrated deep spiritual understanding and insight. Through engaging with collective worship children are encouraged and nurtured as children of God and often challenged to reflect and respond to issues raised; for example to 'respecting rights' both globally and within their own community, and engaging with charitable activities. Collective worship provides a good range of opportunities for developing spirituality through stillness, reflection and prayer, which is sometimes spontaneous and includes the Lord's Prayer. Children talk of how prayer underpins the life of the school and their own personal lives; for instance how prayer can be practical, helping them and others in situations of need or difficulty or when they are challenged regarding their own behaviour. The school provides many other opportunities for prayer throughout the school day and in class worship, such as prayer books, Prayer Pouch, Moments Box and a Kindness Tree. In collective worship children are given many chances to engage with and respond to the teachings of Jesus. This is reinforced by the contribution of the Rector in the life of the school. Celebrations of Christian festivals both in school and in the local church are giving children an understanding of theological concepts such as Incarnation and Salvation together with Christian practice and tradition. Children are also developing an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, aided by

the regular lighting of three candles and an appropriate response at the beginning of collective worship. Visitors to the school, reflecting various different styles, traditions and expressions of Christian worship give children a rich experience of spirituality and worship. Planning of collective worship is systematic and creative. It is monitored and evaluated; verbal and written feedback from children, staff and parents on acts of collective worship constantly contribute to change and improvement.

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

In line with the school's Christian ethos and its desire to meet the needs of all learners, teaching and learning has improved since the 2014 Ofsted, with the result that pupil progress and outcomes have improved considerably. This has been recognised in a 2015 HMI monitoring visit. School leaders have improved communication with parents and carers. Parents are made aware of the school's half-termly focus on Christian values through a newsletter and the website has clear information on collective worship, including acts of worship to which parents are invited. School leaders affirm that the life of the school is built on the firm foundation of Christian beliefs and values, which has a positive impact on pupils' standards of attainment and their well-being. Processes for monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness are an integral part of the school's Raising Achievement Plan, and now need to be fully embedded in order to secure impact, and shared with all stakeholders, including governors. The school's Christian character is well supported by partnerships with diocesan advisors, links schools, members and leaders of the local Christian community and especially the local Rector. Members of the school community describe the local church building as an extension of the school. Parents and others appreciate the opportunity to worship in the church, with the school at major festivals. RE and collective worship are considered important by school leaders and they are well resourced. The RE policy with links to circle time helps to ensure Christian values and religious teaching are fully embraced and understood by children. In line with the policy, the RE action plan ensures that progress and standards are thoroughly evaluated and continuous improvement in teaching and learning is maintained. To this end, governors and staff have attended training and the school is working toward the RE Quality Mark.

SIAMS report April 2016 St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Henstridge BA8 0QD