



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Pamphill Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Pamphill Green, Wimborne, Dorset
BH21 4EE

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Date of inspection: 20 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 17 November 2010

School's unique reference number: 113764

Headteacher: Trevor Davies

Inspector's name and number: Carole McCormack (224)

School context

The setting of this small rural school is unique: the oldest part of the building is a 17th Century grade II listed almshouse; and it is surrounded by National Trust land. The potential challenges of restricted development and cost of upkeep have been turned to advantage by the school which draws on its rich cultural and historical heritage for the benefit of the children's education. Almost all the children are of white British heritage; and two thirds come from outside the catchment area of the school. The number of children eligible for pupil premium and the numbers of children with disabilities and those who have special educational needs are below average. A privately managed pre-school operates in the school hall during the morning.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Pamphill as a Church of England school are good

- The school operates as a strong inclusive Christian community
- The school nurtures the spiritual wellbeing of learners as well as their consistently high academic achievement
- The Christian values of respect, forgiveness and tolerance inform relationships between staff and children, ensuring mature and confident learners

Areas to improve

- To rationalise the many good methods of evaluation into fewer processes which have a sharp focus on impact
- For all stakeholders to work together to reach a shared understanding of spirituality and to enable the children to develop their own personal spirituality through structured support
- For all stakeholders to revisit the core Christian values of the school and to ensure that these are explicitly explored in Worship and are reflected in school policies

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

The children's attainment has been consistently above average over the last five years and parents described finding Pamphill as 'finding gold: no one falls through the gaps'. The vision of the school 'to foster the academic and personal development of everyone in a Christian community' is well met and parents value the way in which their children are treated – not as 'a number, but nurtured as an individual'. Parents describe the way in which the school supports families with social or emotional needs as going 'above and beyond' what they expect; and this close relationship between families and school makes the children feel exceptionally secure. As a result of this, attendance is being steadily improved and is currently in line with national expectations. Pupil premium funding is targeted to meet the needs of the children who attract it and the consequent impact is that, in the last academic year, all children bar one achieved at least in line with their expected attainment. The school's focus on doing everything possible to support the children's spiritual moral social and cultural development as well as their academic achievement is exemplified by the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities offered to all children. These include: the enrichment of the children's spiritual understanding through work with the education department of Salisbury cathedral; and the memorable opportunity to participate in the life of Wimborne Minster through the performance there of the Christmas Nativity play. The Headteacher and RE leader have worked extensively on ways in which the spirituality of the children can be developed. The 'Windows, Mirrors, Doors' paradigm has been introduced and children are encouraged to reflect upon 'wow' moments. However, there is no shared understanding amongst all stakeholders of what Spirituality means within the school community; and no single powerful structured way for each individual learner to develop their own personal spirituality. The school community is threaded through with many implicit Christian values which shape relationships and inform dialogue between adults and children and this is a very striking aspect of provision. Because children are treated with respect and addressed as equals, they mirror respect and demonstrate mature behaviour. 'Jesus' example of forgiveness and reconciliation' is the foundation of the school's approach to each child; 'everyone is useful' 'we are all good at different things' – as one child expressed the unique value placed upon the individual by the school community; and twelve values are shown as being the foundation of a 'good team' in the library. However, all stakeholders have not recently engaged in a rigorous review of the core Christian values of the school, which would enable the school to clearly align its core Christian values with the articles comprising the Rights Respecting level 1 award gained in 2013. This award has had a good impact upon the children's behaviour, but opportunity to systematically link secular rights and responsibilities with the school's Christian foundation has so far been missed. Religious Education has recently been revised in the light of 'Christianity Unpacked'. The 'Discovery' scheme of work is broadly followed and a unit of work on the historical and cultural importance of the school foundation has been incorporated. Assessment is being thoughtfully developed and most learners make good progress that is at least in line with national expectations, with additional support provided for those learners who are not making expected progress. Children's knowledge of Christianity is good and they show an unusually deep empathy and understanding towards those of other faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Learners engage well with collective worship. They listen carefully and are excited to learn from what they hear and see. Because of their mature behaviour, moments of humour and active involvement soon return to quieter attentive engagement. The impact of worship on their lives and attitudes is good and many children can recall previous worship themes accurately and explain how these changed them: 'Working Together' 'made me feel how much I can achieve as part of a team.' However, because worship themes change every week, some children find they do not have sufficient time to fully engage with a concept before having to move on. One child explained how 'there are so many' worship themes 'I can't really think of one in particular – but all of them have got me thinking.' Music, active involvement and

reflection are important aspects of worship. The children are given opportunity to record aspects of their reflection in a variety of ways, but predominantly these are descriptive rather than evaluative and there is no firm structure through which learners can develop their own personal spirituality. There are a range of worship leaders, including the chair of governors and a long standing governor who is an ordained priest. Both these governors have provided reliable, good support for the school in terms of supporting theological understanding and leading worship in both school and church during the past five years, which has been a period of turbulence in terms of local clergy consistently supporting the school. As a result of this governor support, learners have a sound understanding of central theological concepts at an age-appropriate level: 'God wanted to have His own Son to look after the world.' The Headteacher and RE leader plan collective worship themes together; and these are circulated to worship leaders to interpret in their own individual way. The church year and festivals; Biblical themes and Christian values in general; Unicef articles dealing with rights and responsibilities; and social and emotional aspects of learning are all included. However, because the core Christian values of the school have not been rigorously identified, these are not systematically and powerfully explored in worship. Children, staff and governors regularly monitor worship through recording their observations in evaluation booklets, evaluation sheets, worship diaries and collective worship thoughts books. Because there are so many ways of recording findings, the impact of monitoring is diluted and there is not always a sharp focus on impact. However, the school's strong Christian community, which nurtures honest and open relationships, facilitates the free exchange of ideas and provide a fertile ground for ongoing church school improvement.

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

The school vision statement is clear: to work together so that the children can be 'the best they can be' in terms of achievement and robust attitudes towards life, based upon their own sense of worth, nurtured by the strong Christian community of the school. The Headteacher and RE leader work tirelessly to ensure that they provide the best Christian education for the children that they can; and they are very ably supported by the governing body and the small dedicated staff team. Leaders have a sensitive, comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the needs of the school community; the quirks of the building which houses it; and the wider community served by the school. They carry Christian principles into constantly striving to do and be 'the best' whatever the challenges they face. For example, the two issues for development in the last denominational inspection have been well addressed despite significant challenges. The effective governors have met the first issue – to strengthen the links between local church and school. The many forms of monitoring introduced in response to the second issue – that of monitoring and evaluating the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school – partially secure the impact of the school vision, but need to have a sharper, more distinctly evaluative, focus. The school values highly the relationship it has with Salisbury diocese, in terms of both professional development and pastoral support. The diligent RE leader has addressed thoroughly the challenges of devising suitable assessment in the subject and has adopted some of the best up to date materials to strengthen the effectiveness of the subject. Partnerships with parents are very strong and contribute to the effectiveness of provision for the children; and the school works hard to link with the local wider community and the local church. Arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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