



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

### Sherborne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Sherborne

GL54 3DH

**Previous SIAS grade: Good**

**Current SIAMS grade: Satisfactory**

**Diocese of Gloucester**

Local authority: Gloucestershire  
Date of inspection: 13 July 2015  
Date of last inspection: 27 May 2010  
School's URN: 115648  
Headteacher: Mike Pudifoot  
SIAMS Inspector: Alison Lock NS 605

#### School context

Sherborne VC Primary is a small village school with 50 pupils on roll, most of whom are white British. Sherborne is a long, linear village with the school and church within walking distance of each other. The numbers of pupils supported with special educational needs and receiving pupil premium are below the national average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sherborne VC as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The strong committed staff team works closely together to build a school community underpinned by Christian values.
- Articulate children whose skills have been encouraged and developed are able to think deeply about a wide range of questions.
- Wide ranging links within the immediate community and further afield create a community where all adults and children care for each other.

#### Areas to improve

- The governing body, with the community, define a vision for Sherborne in line with its church school status that can be used to develop its distinctive Christian character.
- Enable the governors to regularly evaluate the Christian distinctiveness of the school through monitoring collective worship and religious education (RE) so that they are able to further develop Sherborne as a church school.
- Develop systems that provide opportunities for pupils to regularly plan, lead and evaluate collective worship so that they develop the necessary skills.

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

An evaluation at the start of this academic year, by pupils and staff, of the full range of school values at Sherborne VC resulted in the identification of six core Christian values which inform learning and behaviour within the school. These are particularly evident within the strong relationships throughout the school community between adults and pupils and also between the pupils themselves. Pupils cite specific examples of children who have joined the school mid-term who have been positively changed by the values of this school community. The staff team is very committed and work together closely to ensure that pupils receive a wide range of well-planned, enthusiastic learning experiences that endeavour to develop each child's unique being. The parents are proud to give examples of how Christian values influence behaviour throughout the community as they regularly support each other and pupils report how they love the school and village because they feel so safe and cherished. The school's values are often identified in daily life so the pupils can talk well about their impact on both themselves as individuals and the whole school community with some understanding of their basis in the Christian story. Attendance is well above average within the school as celebrated by the pupils who proudly say that their school has taught them courage so that they can face anything in their future lives. Pupils are encouraged to explore their spirituality through times of spiritual and moral reflection within the school year but opportunities for spiritual development are not consistently included within curriculum planning. A quiet garden in the grounds was designed by the pupils giving them opportunities to be reflective and consequently they are able to express their own thoughts clearly. This was demonstrated in several ways as young pupils had confidence to ask about words they did not understand in collective worship and older pupils demonstrated deep understanding of world issues in their RE lesson. Christianity is taught well as a world faith through RE lessons and the Erasmus project. Several schools are working together with links to other countries that include visits by both pupils and staff. One country was chosen specifically because its major religion is Islam and the pupils have online conference calls alongside cultural project work furthering their understanding of world diversity. The pupils use their own ideas to fundraise for worldwide charities such as the Nepal earthquake and also Great Ormond Street Hospital demonstrating their awareness of the needs of children in other countries as well as their own and their understanding of Christian values in action. Parents report that children have an awareness of other religions and refer to them in everyday life. The church building is a valued resource and is well used by the school. The pupils in Year One and Year Two demonstrate a high level of knowledge of the church building and how the features relate to the Christian story.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**

The whole school community places importance on collective worship as a daily time for reflection and worship. Pupils recognise its role and can describe the impact of it on their lives because they value it as a time of peaceful reflection. Worship is planned based on the needs of the school community, the school's Christian values, seasons of the church year and Bible stories. It is led by members of staff and members of the church including the vicar. Pupils enjoy being involved but they are not given the opportunity to regularly plan and lead worship. Each act of worship uses a worship table with three candles. Pupils say that the candles are three different heights so that everyone can see the importance of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, "but the Spirit is the most important because it fills you with strength and love for others", demonstrating their developing knowledge of the Trinity. Prayer is an important focus of the school day through formal prayers in worship and at lunchtime. Pupils know that there are different types of prayers and that praying is a way of communicating with God but there is little opportunity for them to have time in school for inter-active prayer or to have their prayers used as part of collective worship thus limiting its relevance to their daily lives. The celebration assembly on Fridays uses the same structure as other acts of worship and is much valued by the children as it celebrates successes from the previous week. Feedback on the impact of collective worship is not gathered systematically and so it has a limited effect on

furthering the Christian distinctiveness of the school.

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

The commitment of the headteacher to lead a school where all pupils are given opportunities to develop themselves as unique beings in the eyes of God means that Christian values are articulated and followed within the school community. He is supported in this role by a loyal governing body. During the last year, the chair of governors led a discussion to clarify what defines a church school and this provides a structure by which the governing body plans to further develop the school but currently there is no impact or coherent vision from this structure. The vicar is also chair of governors and he plays a strong role in developing this ethos as he leads worship, gives pastoral support throughout the school community and provides a positive role model for both adults and children. Governors have attended diocesan training which they say has positively supported them in their role but there is little evidence of how the governors evaluate the distinctiveness of the school and develop it. The school and wider community value gathering together to celebrate festivals within the Christian year such as a Remembrance Service at the village memorial which made prominent use of the children's handmade poppies. Members of the church contribute to school life by leading a choir which also sings their own compositions at the monthly family services resulting in more families attending the church. RE is led by an enthusiastic, conscientious subject leader who has a positive impact on the subject throughout the school. However, improvement strategies in both RE and collective worship are not rigorous enough to bring about sustained improvement.

SIAMS report July 2015 Sherborne CE VC Primary School GL54 3DH