



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christ Church Church of England VC First school, Feltham Lane, Frome

Somerset BA11 5AJ

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: **Somerset**

Dates of inspection: **23rd April 2015**

Date of last inspection: **20th April 2010**

School's unique reference number: **123757**

Headteacher: **Sarah Bullmore**

Inspector's name and number: **Steve Ford 764**

School context

Christ Church First School has 179 pupils on roll. It serves a socially challenging area, with 20% of learners on the Special Education Needs register, including 16% at School Action Plus and 1% of children with a Statement of Educational Need. The school has 38% of learners in receipt of Pupil Premium and 18% Gypsy/Roma children on roll. The school is growing and has increased its Planned Admissions Number from 36 to 48. The school has a 56 place Nursery, situated in the adjacent Children's Centre known as The Key Centre. The school works in partnership with Children's Centre services, local schools and is sited one mile from its local church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church First School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- In accordance with its Christian values, the school works in harmony with parents and local community, therefore learners, staff, governors and parents feel valued and contribute to the school's success.
- The school's Christian ethos is demonstrated in the trust the children have in their teachers and the faith that the staff have in children's abilities.
- The children's achievement is a reflection of the close analysis of their progress and attention to their welfare.
- The dedicated headteacher and active, well informed cohesive leadership team are eager to improve standards and promote Christian values.

Areas to improve

- The quality of class collective worship needs to be monitored and assessed by a regular system, to inform planning and secure development.
- Moderate standards and share good practice in Religious Education (RE) by working collaboratively within the church school cluster.

- Identify link governors for RE and collective worship to ensure sustainability and development.

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

In line with its Christian character the school is excellent at providing for all its learners; academically, socially and spiritually. It identifies their needs accurately through good analysis of data. Groups of children are effectively supported through nurture groups, parent support, academic intervention, grouping and differentiation. As a result children achieve their best and make good progress. Christ Church First School is confident in its Christian character and distinctiveness. It has strong Christian attitudes and values and expresses them clearly through all relationships and the school environment, such as classroom and corridor displays. It provides reflection areas in each classroom and these are used as the focal points during class worship. The school maxim, "Children don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.' is lived out. Teachers raise expectations and stimulate children to achieve, by using a variety of teaching methods to engage them and parents report that the support they receive for their children and themselves is excellent. The school demonstrates and articulates its Christian values in its understanding of the 'whole child' and the value of each individual. For example, each child has an individual folder of their own development and experiences from nursery through to the end of their Reception year. Children are aware of a culture of tolerance and forgiveness. They said, "The teachers are good, they look after us'. They also reported, 'teachers don't shout' and that; 'if you have a problem in school or outside, they (the teachers) will help'. Governors have reported that following an incident with a child, he/she carried the Bible into collective worship in a gesture of friendship and forgiveness. The Christian character of the school ensures that it accepts and nurtures respect for different communities. Gypsy /Roma families express a confidence in the school. They said they feel part of 'The Christ Church Family'. All parents are confident in the school and its work and feel included. The school helps the children understand their place in wider society through school trips and visits and supporting local, national and international charities such as Guide dogs for the blind, Poppies and Burundi Sunflower project. Therefore children are aware that they can have an effect on the wider world. The collective worship programme and RE syllabus also make significant and important contributions to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Across the school community collective worship is greatly valued and has a significant impact on the life of the school, making a difference to lives. Collective worship is well planned and organised, inspirational and inclusive with strong reference to the life of Christ and the Bible. It is planned by the leadership team and the incumbent but also has input from staff and pupils via staff meetings and children questionnaires. Children are confident and often take an active part in planning acts of worship and writing prayers. They are fully engaged and behave with reverence and respect during collective worship. The school is outstanding at providing variety in its collective worship, led by different groups and individuals, such as pupils, the incumbent and visitors. The collective worship themes raise aspirations, and encourage spiritual and moral reflection. In particular they challenge children to take responsibility for their own conduct, for example they are often given a task to follow after the main worship in their classroom or during their own time. As a result worship is seen as a constant and a continuum, always there to challenge and engage. Parents report that children often come home and tell them about their collective worship and are 'singing the hymns they learn in school.' The worship environment, wall displays, artefacts and worship structure, all give children an understanding of Anglican tradition. Collective worship has a strong focus on the Trinity; children's understanding of the Trinity is reinforced through the use of the symbols of the Bible, cross and candle, to represent God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Parents and carers are often invited to worship and value this. They particularly enjoy 'Celebration Worship' when

individual learners are acknowledged for academic achievement and for acts of Christian service to others. Prayer plays a central role in the life of the school and learners are provided with opportunities to engage in prayer outside collective worship, such as in the class reflection areas. The pupils understand the value of prayer and add to the prayer life of the school contributing intercessional prayers and praise. They use the classroom prayer stations, but requested more opportunity to contribute to prayer in collective worship. The incumbent reports that 'Prayer is now owned by the school, pupils and staff.' Worship at major Christian festivals is held in church and some worship in classrooms and the outside spaces. Governors report, 'The school is good at creating special places and moments'. The monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is purposeful and is a mixture of anecdotal and formal methods. Monitoring has had an effect, for example the children said they wanted to play a more active role in collective worship and as a result they bring artefacts into the worship. The children also requested that they 'write more prayers', and this has been achieved. Learners also bring charitable causes to the attention of the school and all are encouraged to engage. Increased monitoring by governors would ensure a consistently high standard of classroom worship.

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

The Christian character of this school is clearly articulated and lived out by the whole school community and exemplified by the leadership and management team including governors. The Christian values are prefixed to all policy documentation and are clear and obvious to all, demonstrating that all are committed to Christian values and vision. The staff and governors can clearly link the school's Christian ethos to the success of the learners, through good use of data, learning walks and involvement in the life of the school. The church and school communities are concerned for each other's welfare and communication is effective. For instance, noticeboards in the Church are dedicated to the school and vice versa. The governors and leadership team have clearly identified existing staff for development in church school leadership and are supportive and challenging. The school has delivered inset in RE teaching and collective worship, and therefore staff feel supported in their planning and delivery, for the benefit of the children. The teaching of RE is sometimes discreet, other times, cross curricular ensuring that it has a clear relationship to other subjects. Class RE books show that pupils are well taught and making progress. Through scrutiny of these, RE teaching is monitored and evaluated across the school and demonstrates the importance placed on RE. This could be made more robust by moderating RE across a Christian cluster of schools. The governors are clear about their expectations of the headteacher, as head of a church school, and what they want for their school and community. They should now commit this to a document to ensure continuity into the future. Strategic planning includes school development plans which include the school's Christian distinctiveness. The SIAMS self-evaluation is given high priority and often reviewed by governors and recorded in minutes. The leadership team reach out in the Christian spirit of partnership to help develop the learners, the parents and the community and there has been and continues to be strong relationship between the Church, the Diocese and the school. The school also engages well with other local groups in the community for the benefit of all.

SIAMS report, April 2015, Christ Church First School, Frome, BA11 5AJ