



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Wool Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

High Street
Wool
Wareham
Dorset
BH20 6BT

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Date of inspection: 5 July 2016

Date of last inspection: 7 February 2010

School's unique reference number: 113822

Acting headteacher: Elizabeth Green

Inspector's name and number: Patricia Morris 626

School context

Wool is a smaller than average primary school with 101 children on roll. The majority of children are of white British heritage. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion of children entitled to receive the pupil premium. Over the last twelve months the school has been through a time of challenge with two changes of headteacher, two acting headteachers and three chairs of governor.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wool as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The nurturing and welcoming atmosphere contributes to strong relationships between children and staff that reflect the Christian ethos of the school.
- The sense of team spirit and commitment of staff to the shared vision, based on distinctive core values, is raising the profile of the school.
- The strong supportive partnership with the Diocese is effectively developing the Christian character and securing the future of the school as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Embed the recently identified core Christian values and school motto so that they inform everything the school does and are a basis for school improvement.
- Ensure high quality reflection areas and prayer spaces are promoted within classrooms to support children's spiritual development.
- Develop a process for self-evaluation, involving foundation governors, and effectively evaluates the impact of the school's Christian character and newly defined values.
- Introduce a robust and rigorous system for monitoring religious education (RE) so that a more informed process identifies how to move the subject forward.

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

The school has recently strengthened its Christian character by identifying and articulating four specific core Christian values that best reflect the school ethos. The whole school community were involved in deciding the values and recognise them as distinctively Christian. These values are already beginning to make a difference to children's lives. The introduction of a school motto stating 'God's gifts of love, empathy, courage and respect are our footsteps to lifelong learning' is increasingly underpinning the values. The motto is effective in supporting children's attitudes to learning because they act as a guide in their daily lives. The school recently attained a Rights Respecting Level 2 award which encourages children to want to better themselves underpinned by the concept of restorative justice. This means a great deal to children and is supporting the development of the core values. The good groundwork is, however, only beginning to impact on the school and needs time to embed in order to measure the difference they make to the children's learning and personal development. Staff morale is quickly improving and the current team are working together with a unified vision that is reflected in good relationships between all members of the school community. Christian symbols around the school are limited to crosses although children do recognise other symbols such as 'the dove is a symbol of love'. There are many bright displays around the school but very few are based around the Christian character or religious education (RE), particularly in classrooms. Opportunities for developing children's spiritual development have been identified across the school curriculum and children are proud of their outdoor spiritual garden. They appreciate the 'stillness' it gives them and describe it as a special place 'to be with God' and 'to relax, pray and feel calm'. Children have some awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and show respect for diversity and differences within other faith communities. This is enhanced through a strong connection with a school in the Sudan involving exchanging letters, fund raising and visits from the Bishop of Sudan to the school. Religious education makes some contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to the Christian character of the school. Children enjoy RE and acknowledge its importance in their lives. A detailed school Christian distinctiveness action plan has been written with many actions already initiated. The school is well placed to introduce the remainder of the plan during the next academic year.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Children recognise the importance of worship in the life of the school. They enter worship respectfully and are attentive and responsive when asked questions. They say that 'when we worship we show God how we appreciate what he has given us' and 'it is a time to be silent and reflective'. However, although reflection opportunities are incorporated into worship, a number of children do not appreciate the significance of this being a quiet time. Children's singing is enthusiastic and sets a good atmosphere for worship. There are good links between Bible stories and children's own lives. They understand different types of prayer for 'saying thank you' or 'asking for help'. Praying at different times of the school day means that they see it as a natural part of their lives. The recent introduction of a central 'prayer pad' is valued by children and has increased the importance of prayer. An interactive reflection board based on school values provides children with opportunities to ask thoughtful questions which are then raised in worship. However, prayer spaces and reflection areas within classrooms do not have as high a profile. The partnership with the church is strong with the celebration of major Christian festivals taking place in church and regular visits to school by the local vicar and members of the church. Parents comment positively on the good links and feel encouraged to attend these celebrations. They say worship enables children to feel comfortable talking about God. Worship is well planned with themes based around values. Monitoring takes place on a regular basis by staff and children with suggestions for improvement being implemented. Children have some understanding of Christian festivals and reference is made to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through three candles on a focus table but the significance of this is not yet explicit. Children participate in some aspects of worship although they are not yet involved in planning and leading whole school worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Religious education is making an increasing contribution to the Christian character of the school. Children enjoy RE and say they are interested to learn about Christianity and other world faiths. They particularly appreciate discussion times when they are challenged with big questions such as 'Who is God?' They say they feel safe to give their opinions because they know they will be respected. Children also initiate thoughtful questions themselves such as 'Where did God come from?' although groups led by adults are more focussed than independent groups in these discussions. Such opportunities enable children to reflect on their learning and parents feel this generates worthwhile discussions at home. Standards in RE are variable across the school. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is slightly higher than other core subjects. However, this is not maintained throughout Key Stage 2. The introduction of a cross-curricular approach to RE is giving it a higher profile and supports progress in children's knowledge and skills. The partnership with the church supports children's learning in RE and the local vicar is involved in many aspects of school life including RE. A variety of opportunities are evolving to enhance spiritual development such as challenging children to develop their own ideas and values. Cultural development is well supported through RE planning and awareness of what is happening in the wider world is discussed sensitively and with respect. Some assessment takes place but is informal. Leaders acknowledge the necessity for more rigorous monitoring and evaluation, to include governors, in order to move the subject forward. A clear action plan has been produced to include a cycle of observations in the autumn term. The RE co-ordinator and link governor are eager to attend training and enthusiastic about increasing the prominence of RE within the school.

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

This is an important time for the leadership and management team who are diligently working together after a challenging period and significant changes. School leaders articulate a shared vision based on distinctive core values and the initial impact of their hard work is beginning to influence school life. The sense of team spirit and community is a credit to the leadership team and to staff, and both parents and children are complimentary about the positive, nurturing atmosphere in the school. The newly formed governing body is extremely well led by a highly regarded chair from another school who has been designated to support them. He is effectively leading the governing body and working in close partnership with the acting headteacher. Together, with very good support from the diocese, the school is now at a point to go from strength to strength very quickly especially with the plans in place for the next academic year. Foundation governors have a strong determination to support the leadership in the school and are eager to become involved in moving the school forward within a Christian ethos. The partnership with the local church is very supportive, although the local vicar is currently moving and there is no prospective replacement. Church members are keen to maintain a high profile within the school community during this time and have a planned rota to support the school. The RE leader is gaining confidence and has introduced an inquiry based culture in lessons which is increasing the profile of RE. Developing links within the local community include participating in fund raising for local charities and singing around the village at special times of the year. Parents have opportunities to give their opinions and say 'children have their own identity right from the start and are treated as individuals'. They feel Christian values are giving children a sense of responsibility for their own actions and preparing them well for future life. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report July 2016 Wool CE VA Primary School Wool Wareham Dorset BH20 6BT