



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Southwick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hollis Way
Southwick, Trowbridge
Wiltshire BA14 9PH

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: 11 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 14 January 2011

School's unique reference number: 126359

Headteacher: Lesley Shellard

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Southwick is smaller than the average size primary school with 184 children on roll. The school has grown in size since September 2013. The large majority of children are of a white British heritage and reflect a very broad range of social and economic backgrounds. A high number of children either joins or leaves the school at times other than the usual. The number of children with learning needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Overall attendance is in line with the national average. Staffing has changed considerably since the previous inspection.

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

- Explicit Christian values make a valuable contribution to the children's personal development and are increasingly becoming integral to their learning.
- Acts of worship provide transformational opportunities for children to learn from Bible stories and apply this to their own lives.
- The commitment of the headteacher and governors to developing the Christian ethos means that it has moved forward since the previous inspection.

Areas to improve

- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality among adults in school so that more creative opportunities can be offered for children to explore what spirituality means to them.
- Ensure that children are given quality time and space to reflect and pray in innovative ways that enhance these experiences outside of worship.
- Develop the skills and abilities of leaders and managers, including governors, to gather high quality evidence of the impact of the Christian ethos and use that to identify further challenging areas for improvement.

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

The review of core values in September 2015, in a process that involved all members of the school community, raised the profile of the Christian distinctiveness of the school and placed values more firmly at the centre of its ethos. They are firmly established as an important aspect of the life of the school and referred to by adults and children regularly when talking about relationships and attitudes towards learning. A reduction in the number of values to twelve has also allowed them to be explored in greater depth through collective worship. Older children in particular now refer to values as a natural part of the life of the school. They explain that God gave values to 'show the things He would like us to do' and 'not to go around hating each other'. Children understand that respect helps build relationships regardless of background. They appreciate that, 'while not everyone has a faith or believes in God', He believes in them. The strength of the Christian values is the contribution they make to the children's attitudes towards learning. They have made a difference to the effectiveness of teamwork in lessons with children working together more successfully in a mutually supportive role. They cooperate with each other to tackle challenges and problems and, through discussion, come to solutions that enhance their learning. This contributes to the rising standards and children's improving academic progress. Opportunities for children to develop a spiritual awareness are mainly through reflection. These occur in the curriculum through religious education and in some other lessons. Some useful work by staff to explore a shared approach to understanding spirituality has started to impact on teaching and learning but this is still at a relatively early stage. Children respond with enthusiasm and delight when challenged to explore and express their views on matters of faith and belief. They share their ideas and listen to each other with a keen interest and have the confidence to support their own views but be open to the views of others. Religious education makes a very good contribution to these discussions and the children's understanding of moral issues such as justice and fairness.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The impact of acts of worship is outstanding because they encourage children to learn from Bible stories and apply worship messages to their own lives. Children talk about times when these messages have changed the way they think about someone or something. Younger children explain how stories from the Bible relate to values such as kindness which teach them to look after each other at playtime. Older children explain how forgiveness can help them 'move on' in their life. They understand that forgiveness is the 'right thing to do' but not always an easy option. They have a mature appreciation that approaches to forgiving may depend on circumstances and isn't 'as easy as black and white'. The change in the planning of worship, so that one value is explored over six weeks, has enabled them to be explored in greater depth and this is reflected in the quality of children's responses. Having trialled several ways to evaluate the impact of worship, the regular meetings with children to discuss their views has produced some excellent quality evidence of the impact on their understanding. This has been used to improve the quality of delivery further. In particular, these have included ideas from children in the worship teams who have suggested ways to take the impact of worship beyond the acts of worship themselves and into the school environment. For example, they are currently exploring having a values tree outside where children can place prayers that recognise values in others. Each classroom has a reflection area linked to collective worship. These are being increasingly used by children to recognise when they see someone else live out one of the values. Children have a sophisticated understanding of the purpose of prayer. They explain how prayer can support them when they are in trouble or 'lift someone's spirits' if they are ill. They link this with their growing understanding of the nature of the Trinity. Younger children explain how God created the world and Jesus came to teach us. They think that the Holy Spirit 'takes all our sins away' and that this makes them 'really happy'. Children regard the celebration of festivals such as Easter and Christmas at the local church as part of the life of the school. They understand that symbols such as candles and crosses have significance to Christians and help to create an environment in which to worship. They are respectful of worship and show a reverence and quiet when praying and reflecting. Worship at

Southwick is a time for joyous celebration of the children's spirituality.

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

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in creating a distinctive ethos that has greater meaning and purpose for all children and their families. The headteacher particularly has ensured that the focus on raising standards, which are improving, has not stopped development of the school as a church school. She deserves credit for this because explicit Christian values are making an impact on the children's attitudes towards learning through the greater engagement and collaboration with their peers. Governors have a good awareness of the strengths of the school and how to continue to improve. They understand the need to develop the skills and abilities to challenge the school both as a church school and the children's academic progress. This is still an area that needs developing as far as church school ethos is concerned. The headteacher has a very clear grasp of what needs to be done to develop the Christian ethos and has the full support of the governing body to move forward in a manageable way. Procedures for evaluating the ethos are realistic and grounded in a good understanding of the expectations of the inspection process. The school values its links with the local church and the role of the vicar in the life of the school. Parents support the school's ethos because they feel it allows their children to explore what faith means to them in a natural way. They say that their children 'pick up' the values and use them at home. Parents consider the celebration of special Christian festivals in the church an important part of the life of the school and would appreciate the opportunity to visit celebration worship on Fridays. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

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