



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### St. Nicholas and St. Laurence Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School.

Court Road,  
Broadway  
Weymouth  
Dorset  
DT3 5DQ

**Diocese: Salisbury Local authority: Dorset**

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Date of last inspection: March 18<sup>th</sup> 2010

School's unique reference number: 8353652

Headteacher: Helen Williams

Inspector's name and number: Lorraine Pugh 819

#### School context

St. Nicholas and St. Laurence Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary school is an average size primary school with 200 pupils. The large majority of pupils live in the school's catchment area and are from white British heritage. Pupils come from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average although it varies across year groups. The school is situated on the edge of the town and is part of a shared campus. The current headteacher has been in post since 2012 following a period of turbulence in leadership.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Nicholas and St. Laurence CE VA school as a Church of England school are good.

- The Christian ethos of the school in which all pupils are nurtured and highly valued has led to significant improvements to standards of personal development, academic achievement and well being.
- The strong links between the school's Christian values, collective worship and religious education (RE), each having Jesus and the teachings of the Bible as their focus.
- The commitment and vision of the senior leadership, governors and clergy ensuring that the school continues to develop its Christian ethos.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that the school's Christian distinctiveness is reflected in school documentation, prospectus and website.
- Establish clear methods for RE assessment to ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of their learning and how they can progress further.
- School leaders and governors to formalise their monitoring role, in order to evaluate the impact of the school's work as a distinctively Christian school.

**The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting**

### **the needs of all learners**

St. Nicholas and St. Laurence CE VA Primary school is a vibrant Christian community where pupils value their school, their work, their peers and their teachers. The inspirational commitment and leadership of the headteacher is evident in every aspect of school life. She has been instrumental in the school's significant improvement in academic standards. Pupils are now achieving significantly above national levels in reading, writing and maths. She has worked closely with local agencies in successfully addressing low attendance. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and they are constantly encouraged to challenge themselves. Christian values (7Cs) are explicitly taught across the curriculum and this has had a significant impact on academic, spiritual and moral development. Pupils, parents, governors and staff refer constantly to the 7Cs which are firmly embedded into school life. The school's shared mission statement, together we love, together we hope, together we learn, has been designed in a triangle in order to represent the Trinity, further establishing the school's position as a Christian school. Pupils who have special educational needs are highly valued and supported by the school's Christian community. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary with pupils living through the values of respect and responsibility. Incidents are resolved in a spirit of reconciliation. One child, explaining their understanding of the values stated, 'It's no use being nice inside and following them if you can't do it outside in the playground. The 7Cs help us be friends and know how to act and behave towards each other.' Pupils gain an understanding of their role in the local and wider community through their charity activities. Teachers set clear examples to the children. For example, two teachers are spending half term in Kenya visiting the school that St. Nicholas and St. Laurence actively supports. As a result, pupils are able to witness the difference that helping others can make. There is an intrinsic link with spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the school's values. The school's achievement of gaining the 'Artsmark Gold' award is testament to its commitment of nurturing pupils' spiritual development through rich experiences of art and music. Pupils are able to explain the feelings they have when working individually, collaboratively or with a specialist artist. One pupil explained, 'It can make you feel tingly'. The stunning artwork around the school displays themes from Bible stories, nature and literature. Excellent relationships throughout the school enable staff and pupils to work closely together and this results in outstanding pastoral care. Parents speak of the care given to families with the school staff being pro active in finding ways to support them. An example being the school's care and compassion after family break up. Parents spoken to enthusiastically explained the importance of the school's Christian ethos to them. Some said that they chose the school for the welcoming and inclusive feel that they didn't get when visiting other schools. They said that they saw evidence of the school's Christian work in the behaviour of their children at school and at home and they praised the individual family support given by the leadership of the school and the local clergy. Pupils are able to talk about other faiths, demonstrating knowledge and respect for faiths other than Christianity. Pupils are challenged in RE with difficult issues, for example, God's presence in factory farming.

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

Collective Worship has importance in the life of the school and pupils are able to talk about the worship themes. Themes are linked to the school's values as well as relevant links to local issues, for example, the role of the nearby lifeboat service. Worship is well planned around the 'Values for Life' scheme and the church year. Organisation and impact of worship is discussed in staff meetings and at management level but currently does not inform future planning and provision. Information Technology, stimulating resources and regular visitors ensure that pupils gain a rich worship experience that captures their attention and interest. Pupils listen attentively and participate with enthusiasm. The Vicar plays an active role in the leading of worship as well as in its planning and organisation. Worship focuses around the work of Jesus and his central position within Christianity. Pupils are able to talk confidently about Bible stories and Christian festivals. Anglican traditions are evident with pupils understanding their meaning, such as why we light the candle and the colours of the altar cloths. Pupils have an

understanding of the Trinity at an age appropriate level with adults making sure that language is simple and within their understanding. Pupils are able to explain that God is the father, Jesus was God's son and that the Holy Spirit is with us constantly, even though we can't see it. Pupils are regular participators in worship. Pupils say that they feel lucky to have two churches and they enjoy their regular visits for worship. They say that they particularly like the church with soft seating and carpets as it makes them feel, 'comfortable and holy.' Personal prayer and reflection are used in Worship and pupils respond to this quiet time for their own thoughts. Pupils are able to explain how they use prayer in their lives. The school's development plans for a spiritual garden for personal prayer and reflection will contribute further to its impact on the daily lives of the pupils.

### **The effectiveness of religious education is good.**

Standards achieved by pupils are good, as evidenced in their books and through discussion. Lessons are well prepared and provide appropriate age related challenge. Teachers have a good understanding of their subject and they shape tasks and questioning accordingly. For example, the older children were challenged to discuss God's presence in photographs showing street begging and factory farming. The resulting discussions displayed deep thought and respectful debate. Written work shows evidence of a balance between 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'. Pupils respond positively in lessons when working with the class, each other or independently. It is evident through their attitudes that they enjoy RE and are developing a good understanding of the Christian faith and other faiths. The skills developed in RE allow pupils to be able to think and reflect spiritually and morally. RE has strong links to the school's collective worship and reinforces the school's Christian values. Artwork linked to the RE curriculum has played a major role in the school being awarded with the 'Artsmark Gold Award'. Many of the pieces portray Bible stories and pupils re tell these stories and their meaning from the artwork. Pupils gained rich spiritual experiences through working with art specialists in a collaborative way with the Bible story remaining the focus as they worked. The subject leader has introduced a new RE scheme to support staff in providing a consistent and challenging curriculum. This is used alongside the locally agreed syllabus. She is beginning to monitor and evaluate the impact of the new scheme on the RE curriculum but this, with assessment procedures, is still being developed. The leadership of the school has accurately identified priorities to take RE forward and this is making a positive impact on the quality of RE throughout the school. The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education.

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

The Headteacher has a clear and passionate Christian vision for the school and she is well supported by the clergy and governors. Since the last inspection the school has had turbulent leadership and this resulted in declining standards. The current headteacher has a very accurate view of the issues facing the school. Since her joining the school in 2012 she has quickly addressed these issues and brought about rapid improvements. She has had the full support of her governors and staff. These improvements are most notable in pupil behaviour, academic achievement and staff confidence. This has resulted in a vibrant, caring school where all individuals are valued. Development points from the last SIAS inspection have been successfully addressed. The headteacher and governors have pupils as the centre of all their decisions. Strong links with Salisbury Diocese ensure that staff and governors benefit from personal, professional and spiritual development. The governors support the school and have a firm grasp of their role in ensuring the school's Christian ethos and what it means to be a Christian school. They have a clear vision for the school's development and the actions needed to fulfil this. Monitoring and evaluation contribute to the school's effectiveness as a Church school, however, the school is aware that improvements to the way they document this is necessary. The school greatly values and benefits from its close partnership with the local church. The vicar is a regular and welcome visitor and a very active member of the governing

body. He regularly greets parents as they bring their children to school and parents say that they really appreciate this approachability and contact. Church events are included on the school website and school events feature in the parish newsletter. However school documentation and the website do not contain key information such as the Collective Worship policy and the RE curriculum. Parents spoken to during the inspection agreed that the school gives their children opportunities to encounter faith and that this is done in a way that promotes understanding and engagement. They say that the school provides a gentle and kind environment in which their children are allowed to develop as a whole child. Leaders ensure that RE and Collective worship impact on the Christian development of the pupils and link with the core Christian values of the school. From established partnerships with a school in Kenya and other more local charity work pupils have a developing awareness of our responsibilities to others. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures.

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