



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **Bickleigh Down Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

School Drive  
Woolwell  
Plymouth  
PL6 7JW

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Outstanding

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** Exeter

Local authority: Devon

Dates of inspection: 6 May 2015

Date of last inspection: 7 July 2010

School's unique reference number: 113493

Headteacher: Martin Hancock

Inspector's name and number: Patricia Morris 626

#### **School context**

Bickleigh Down is a larger than average sized primary school with 398 children on roll. The majority of children are of white British heritage with a small minority of children coming from other ethnic backgrounds. The headteacher is the second headteacher to have been appointed since the last inspection. He has been in place for two years. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of children supported by the pupil premium is also below the national average.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bickleigh Down as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The very strong commitment and dedication of the school's leadership and management to the continual development of the Christian character of the school.
- The exemplary behaviour and quality of relationships between all members of the community reflect deeply embedded Christian values.
- The very positive impact of collective worship on the spiritual dimension of children's development.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Develop a more systematic way to monitor and evaluate collective worship, through high quality evidence gathered from staff and children, to identify further improvement.
- Provide more opportunities for all children to take direction of worship through greater instances to plan and lead.
- Develop a more rigorous system for assessing religious education so that a more informed process identifies how to move the subject forward.

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

The Christian character of the school is outstanding because distinctive Christian values are deeply embedded and permeate the daily life of the school. The five core values of love, care, forgiveness, honesty and respect are apparent in the school's welcoming, inclusive and friendly atmosphere. Children have a clear understanding of these values and how they are acted out in their relationship with others. They talk enthusiastically about the close relationship between the core values and two key commandments, 'Love God' and 'Love your neighbour'. The underpinning of relationships by strong values makes a significant contribution to the outstanding behaviour. This is reflected in the school's approach to its rewards system when children specifically receiving recognition for living out these values. Parents say children discuss the values at home and confirm that core Christian values are firmly embedded in every aspect of school life. Values are reflected in children's attitudes to learning enabling them to ask questions and share opinions knowing they will be respected. Class reflection areas promote the core values in many different ways. For example, children are supporting the recent earthquakes in Nepal and therefore they have a significant impact on the children's learning about the wider world. The physical environment is bright and vibrant displays, such as Bible stories reflected in stained glass windows and mosaics, contribute to a visual expression of the Christian ethos. Children have a developing understanding of Christianity as a world faith and this is extremely well supported through fund raising for both local charities and global charities such as 'Stand by me' when clothing was collected to sell in support of children at a school in Burma. These opportunities make a positive impact on the children's understanding of and respect for Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. There is an excellent understanding of spirituality with many opportunities across all curriculum areas for children to engage in and develop their experiences. As a result, children feel able to express their thoughts and feelings with confidence. Older children show a deeper reflection that helps them form their own ideas and extend their curiosity. Children are challenged by religious education (RE) and it makes a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

Collective worship is a highly valued and very important part of life in the school. Christian values underpin themes for worship and are supported by excellent links between stories from the Bible and school values that are clearly rooted in the teachings of Jesus. Children learn from the messages in worship and make connections between the stories they hear and their responsibilities towards others by challenging them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children sing with great enthusiasm and respond positively because worship is animated and visual. This approach to worship makes a positive contribution to the children's excellent behaviour and relationships. A range of leaders, including staff and clergy, offer children a rich experience of worship. The clergy especially play a significant role in developing the children's understanding of Anglican traditions. They are presented in an innovative and creative way such as the nursery rhyme mass and as a result children talk excitedly about more formal aspects of church life and have gained a wide knowledge and understanding of their impact in the church. Children have a developing understanding of the Trinity and its importance in the church. They are able to confidently identify a variety of Christian festivals. Children talk enthusiastically about the seasons of the church year and the associated colours. They realise that prayer is an integral part of the school day and that it can be used in different ways. The Lord's Prayer and responses are regular features of worship and prayers are said at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. An after school prayer group which has contributed significantly to the high profile given to prayer provides children with opportunities to write and share their own prayers. Older children in the weekly worship club are confident in planning and leading worship and act as good models for other children who would like the opportunity to participate in future worship. Monitoring and evaluation of worship takes place by governors. Children are invited to give their thoughts of worship through post-it notes on the worship

board but as yet they do not have a specific role in its evaluation. A recently formed ethos committee recognise that a more systematic approach to observations would improve the monitoring and evaluation of worship.

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

The Church School Distinctiveness Leader (CSDL) is passionate about RE and ensures its high profile and its positive contribution to the Christian character of the school. Standards of attainment are in line with other core subjects and national expectations. Very good progress is seen across all year groups and this is reflected in evidence within children's work. The CSDL has a high level of expertise and supports staff, identifying areas for development and providing relevant professional development for teachers although there are few opportunities for staff to share good practice. Good resources impact positively on teaching and learning. Good quality displays around the school reflect the high profile of RE in the curriculum. For example, a whole school theme day explored Creation and some exciting artwork based on children's reflections of the day enliven the corridors. A well-focussed action plan contributes to improvement within the subject. Links with the school's core values and opportunities for spiritual development have successfully been identified within units of work. The newly developed marking system has improved assessment in RE and enhances the quality of future target setting. This enables children to have the opportunity to act on feedback given. Class Big books are used effectively to provide evidence of the variety and quality of teaching and learning of RE and include drama and the arts. Children value this dimension and talk enthusiastically about how they 'act out Bible stories then re-enact them for each other showing their relevance in our lives'. The impact of these cross-curricular links with RE is evident in the opportunities children have to develop their understanding of their own place in the world. Lesson observations confirm the school's view that teaching is consistently good. Quality planning ensures lessons are interesting with clear outcomes linked to attainment targets. High quality questioning challenges children to reflect and consider links with their everyday lives. RE provides opportunities for children to make links between different beliefs and a range of faiths and to celebrate diversity. As a result children talk positively about respecting other points of view and one child said 'it is still important to listen to each other even if we don't agree'. Monitoring and evaluation take place regularly through lesson observations, work scrutiny and internal tracking systems.

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

The headteacher provides exceptionally effective leadership and is well supported by the senior leadership team and governors. There is an excellent understanding of how the Christian ethos makes a difference to the lives of the children and this has led to an environment in which Christian values are lived out. Leaders consistently and confidently articulate and promote a vision for the school based on their five core Christian values. They fully understand that the values make an impact to the whole life of the school. The enthusiasm and dedication of the headteacher, the governors and the senior leadership team is a catalyst in the improvement of the school. Governors have worked extremely hard during the past two years and have a thorough understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness based on effective and insightful self-evaluation. Their commitment in supporting the Christian ethos of the school ensures they are providing all children with an excellent foundation for their future. This leads to effective strategies for improvement and maintains a strong focus on meeting the needs of all children in their care. The whole curriculum is informed by the distinctive Christian vision that contributes to excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. Parents have a strong relationship with the school. They say their views are taken into account through regular questionnaires and acknowledge that concerns are dealt with effectively and promptly and that staff are extremely supportive. Links with charities develop children's understanding of global communities and Christian values in action. There are high levels of involvement with the church and the relationship between the school and the local clergy is exceptionally strong.