



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### St Dubricius Church of England VA First School

Parson Street, Porlock, Minehead, Somerset TA24 8QJ

**Previous SIAS Grade: Good**

**Diocese: Bath and Wells**

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 26 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 25 March 2010

School's unique reference number: 123837

Headteacher: Chris Blazey

Inspector's name and number: Wendy Simmons -127

#### School context

80 pupils from the village and surrounding area are taught in three mixed age classes and there is a Nursery. The school premises, extended to provide learning areas and outside play space, also include a Parish office and community resource. Children are mainly white British and enter the school with mixed ability skills. Progress is good or better and pupils leave with average or above attainment. The number of children eligible for free school meals and Pupil Premium is below the national average, but the number of pupils receiving SEN support is above the national average. The school is a founding member of the Exmoor Coast Federation which is a soft federation focussed on raising attainment and providing opportunities for all children.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Dubricius as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The palpable Christian ethos ensures the school fully embraces its Christian foundation and promotes Christian values in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher and governors provide outstanding and enthusiastic leadership of the school as a church school.
- The outstanding leadership of the religious education (RE) subject leader impacts on children's learning and their spiritual, moral and social development.
- The parish priest and church community give outstanding support to the school.
- Relationships between all stakeholders are excellent and based on Christian principles, ensuring outstanding guidance and support for all children.

#### Areas to improve

- Implement the RE subject leader's excellent action plan to promote attainment and progress for all children.
- Provide opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in Britain and the wider world.

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

The school's vision statement is reflected in the welcoming ethos of the school and the enthusiasm and welcome of pupils. In living out this vision statement the school provides a safe and caring environment where all can flourish and where Christian values are promoted and upheld. The identified Christian values, including Hope, Trust, Humility, Forgiveness, Service, and Respect are lived out daily by staff and children alike and form the basis of the Christian foundation of St Dubricius School. In this environment where all children feel valued, they enjoy their learning and as a result make good progress, achieve well and attain average or above standards in writing and mathematics by the end of year four. They develop excellent speaking and listening skills and their attainment in reading is above national expectations. Excellent support is given to those with special educational needs and those helped by the pupil premium. Attendance figures are sometimes a challenge because of the nature of this sparsely populated area where a number of children have a distance to travel. Children's skills of reflection and wonder are developed through a range of curricular, extra-curricular activities and visits. RE and collective worship ensure that children's knowledge and understanding of Bible stories is well developed and as a result they can relate them to Christian faith and belief, and their own lives. In this way RE and collective worship make an outstanding contribution to the school's Christian distinctiveness. Examples are the excellent annual Remembrance service which takes place at the 'Marsh Memorial' site and involves school, church and the whole community. Festival services take part in St Dubricius church and involve children in the planning and preparation, especially the leavers' service. Forest School activities for Nursery and Reception children, use of the extensive school grounds, the local environment of Exmoor and coastal area all make an outstanding impact on children's spiritual, moral and social development. Children's cultural development is good because the school takes the opportunity to take year 3 children to Bristol for a residential visit to allow them to reflect upon life in a city, whilst year 4 enjoys an activity residential. Reflective areas in classrooms, visits, links with other local schools and the work of the school council all support children's understanding and awareness of a world beyond their classroom. For example the school encourages charitable giving, from delivering Harvest food baskets locally to 'Save the Children' and the Christmas 'Shoebox' appeal. However children's global understanding is, as yet, in the early stages of development. Relationships between staff, governors, parents and community are outstanding, as was evident from the number of parents wanting to share their support and admiration for the school.

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

The daily act of collective worship is highly valued by all and central to the life of the school, not only developing a strong sense of community but also having a clear Christian focus. Collective worship is inspirational and makes an outstanding impact on children's understanding and appreciation of the school's Christian values and the difference they make to their own lives. It provides opportunities for spiritual and moral reflection and also gives children experience of the traditions and practices of the Christian church. Collective Worship is well planned by the worship team, consisting of the Headteacher, vicar, Methodist minister and parishioners with a strong emphasis on Christian teaching through Bible stories, saints' days, charities and Christian values interwoven throughout the Christian calendar. The team ensures a consistent approach and plenty of variety to engage the children, and all worship leaders are given information and resources to support. The vicar, Methodist minister, church youth worker and local church members are regular worship leaders and as a result children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity is enhanced by them. Parents and the church community welcome being able to participate in festivals and special services, which promotes the sense of the school as a Christian community. Individual acts of worship and the variety of weekly themes reflect the school's identified Christian values. For example an act of worship based upon Easter Food was linked to the current value of 'Fellowship'. Children reflected on their activities of the week, particularly their Easter event 'The Miracle Worker' and the

biblical events following the Last Supper. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; when appropriate the Trinity is referred to in worship and the Anglican blessing used. In a recent worship about St Patrick the Irish Shamrock was introduced as a symbol of the Trinity. One child said, 'it was about God the Spirit'. Music, prayer and reflection support the outstanding worship experience for all children and adults. The excellent singing, coupled with symbols of Christianity displayed on the altar table, make a significant spiritual impact on all children, helping them reflect upon the world and their place within it. Prayer plays an important place in the life of the school. Children are familiar with Anglican verses and responses and know and use the Lord's prayer as well as their own written prayers. Opportunities for prayer and spiritual reflection occur regularly. For example, some children attend the JAM (Jesus and Me) club where they freely express their Christian belief through a variety of activities and prayerful reflection. The worship team hold regular meetings to review and evaluate worship based on a variety of written evaluations and children's comments, to stimulate further improvement.

### **The effectiveness of Religious Education is good**

The high profile of RE in the school ensures that it makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children and their understanding of the school's values. RE enjoys equal status as a core subject and is afforded appropriate dedicated curriculum time. The standard of attainment for the majority of pupils is in line with national expectations and learners' achievement in RE is equal to and often better than in other core subjects. The locally agreed syllabus provides for mixed age teaching with an emphasis on Christianity. Judaism and Islam are also studied with other faiths incorporated as part of thematic work. Teaching observed was good, with challenging questions resulting in thoughtful responses during peer discussion. Pupils are well motivated and enjoy RE because their previous knowledge is addressed and their enthusiasm is engaged with creative activities. For example the Easter Event planned and organised by the vicar, Methodist minister and local church members included drama, role play, story, art, music and an Easter Egg hunt. This provided the stimulus for the RE observed. Children listen well and can reflect upon ideas presented to them. For example, following discussion about Judas' betrayal, children were asked how they thought Judas and the other disciples felt. The RE subject leader has embraced her role with passion and enthusiasm and is supporting colleagues effectively. The teaching of RE is carried out by all class teachers ensuring both discrete time allocation and cross curricular opportunities. The RE leader monitors and evaluates teaching and learning and assesses pupil attainment. She ensures that there are good resources, and her action plan has clear objectives for the growth and development of the subject. Relevant training opportunities are being put in place for staff to further develop their expertise in this subject. Outstanding links with the local Christian community provides additional support for aspects of the RE curriculum.

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

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported by an experienced and proactive governing body, ensures that the ethos of this Christian school underpins the attainment and progress of all children regardless of ability or need. The broad and balanced curriculum is supported by school's identified vision and values. This impacts upon children's achievement and outstanding behaviour and is supported by effective safeguarding systems. The outstanding support from the vicar and parish team supports vulnerable families and aids children's integration into school systems and their subsequent learning and progress. The collective worship team and RE subject leader contribute to the outstanding impact upon the provision and outcomes for all children because of their close working relationship and the involvement of the church community. The detailed worship programme supports all worship leaders and is linked to weekly themes and the Christian values that underpin the ethos of the school. The

outstanding RE subject leader has attended in-service training, and is therefore able to train and support all staff in their delivery of RE, giving them confidence in their provision for all pupils. Parents are very supportive of the school's Christian values which they identify as a strong foundation for life within a safe and secure environment where their children can learn and grow. A comment from the parent survey says, "My child has found confidence, stability and friends". Positive links with local churches and the Diocese impacts significantly upon the Christian distinctiveness of St Dubricius as a Church school. Areas for development in the previous report have been addressed and all statutory obligations are met.

SIAMS report March 2015 St Dubricius C of E VA First School, Porlock TA24 8QJ.