



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Great Torrington Bluecoat Church of England V. C. Primary School

Borough Road, Great Torrington, Devon EX38 7NU

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Outstanding

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** Exeter

**Local authority:** Devon

**Dates of inspection:** 10 February 2016

**Date of last inspection:** 11 February 2011

**School's unique reference number:** 113377

**Head teacher:** Angela Fleming

**Inspector's name and number:** Revd David Hatrey 844

#### School context

In 2013 Great Torrington Bluecoat School was created through the amalgamation of the Infant C of E Voluntary Controlled School with the adjoining Junior school. It is larger than the average primary school. Most children are from white British backgrounds, with just 2% of the school population having English as an additional language. The number of children who have Special Educational Needs is above the national average. The number of children who are in receipt of Pupil Premium funding is in line with national averages. There are currently 518 children on roll.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Torrington Bluecoat Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Christian values are well established across the school and are making a real contribution to the lives and choices that the children make.
- Strong and sensitive leadership by the head teacher and senior members of staff have overseen effective amalgamation of the two schools into one. They have clear vision for the work of a church school.
- The drive and enthusiasm of the RE/Collective worship coordinator is steadily developing the impact of these areas on the lives of the children.
- Excellent relationships have been established between the children, staff and parents, who feel well supported and valued by the school.

#### Areas to improve

- Provide support and opportunities for children to regularly plan and lead acts of worship.

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

The school's Christian values are derived from the Fruits of the Spirit found in Galatians. Each class has a prominent display of these values. As a result, children have a good understanding of these values in the light of the biblical teaching that they receive. They recognise these values in

others as well as themselves. Seeing these values in their peers they explain this to an adult who would add the name to the display. Adults too celebrate seeing these fruits in action, adding names or picture to the specific branch of the display. Children are proud to receive these awards; this is confirmed by parents who say that they use and talk about the values at home. Children are confident to confirm how these values change their behaviour and shape their community, giving specific examples of this. Staff at the school model these values and develop excellent relationships with the children. Bullying and name calling are very rare, as children remind one another of the importance of these values. The school's Christian character is also reflected in the way that any behavioural issues are dealt with; for example, children are asked to consider how their behaviour has hurt or affected others, then actions to address this are undertaken by all involved. The school is active in supporting children who have behavioural issues, providing for them effectively, so that they feel valued and part of the community. The school's drive is successful in raising standards, so that progress made by the children is now at least good and more children are achieving beyond their expectations, as compared with national averages. This is undertaken in a collaborative way allowing children to develop the fruit of kindness, where they support one another in their learning journey. The spiritual development and well being of children in Key Stage One is impressive. Children support one another, brushing away worries of the other, helping them to be calm and reflect. This enriches the relationship and spirituality between the children, which is highly valued. Journals of the children's experiences in Forest school show their reflections relate to God as creator, as well as the detail of all He has made. Older children use weekly reflection diaries to think about their learning as well as the wonder of nature and beyond. Staff monitor these ensuring a balance of experiences as well as seeking to build in progression. Children say that they find the reflection areas in each class make a positive contribution to their understanding of how their actions affect others. Linking with a school in India has developed the children's understanding of the church on an international level as well as developing their cultural understanding and their respect for others of different faiths. Using Skype, watching and joining in Indian dancing, becoming pen pals and welcoming visitors from this school, helps them to understand how Christians in other parts of the world celebrate their faith. Religious Education (RE) encourages children to respond to some of the 'big' questions of life. Children draw upon their moral understanding to begin to answer these. They consider Christian responses as well as those from other major faiths or those of no faith. They recognise that in some instances the answers are a mystery.

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

The collective worship coordinator has skilfully woven a range of themes into a coherent programme; these include enriching an understanding the Fruits of the Spirit, the Christian calendar, as well as having a focus for each half term, such as footprints or parables. This leads to a theme for each week and a key point is developed each day. As a result collective worship engages and interests the children due to the positive pace, starting from children's own experiences and action songs, sung with enthusiasm. The range of visitors who lead collective worship in different styles generates real interest. Children recognise that Collective worship is a special time to be with God and the lighting of candles and the use of Christian symbols help to make it a distinctive time in the school day. Children join with the local church community in celebrating major festivals. Children's understanding of the festivals is good and they are able to talk thoughtfully about their meaning. Equally they have a good understanding of Jesus and his significance within Christian worship. Collective worship themes draw upon biblical material, enabling the children to understand Jesus's teaching, reflect upon these and the example this gives for their daily lives. Therefore children have an emerging understanding of the Trinity. Children's understanding of prayer is developed well in the Early Years and Key Stage One. They understand that prayer is talking and sharing with God. Children use prayer to give thanks, to make requests and share their thoughts. This is developed with older children when they consider the structure of the Lord's Prayer and use this as a model. They move on to thinking about praying for the wider world and in response to natural disasters. Children realise that they can use prayer for themselves outside of school when they are sad or worried. There are

opportunities at the end of collective worship for children to spontaneously offer a prayer in response to what they have heard or for a personal need. Others will use the prayer corner to write prayers of thankfulness. Children respond to some of the messages in collective worship by fund raising for particular projects. The yearly toy service, celebrating Epiphany, is an example of this, which generates support for a Romanian orphanage. The children's worship group is increasingly making a contribution to developing collective worship. This addresses an issue from the previous inspection. They monitor some acts of collective worship, feeding ideas back to the coordinator. As a result, there have been some changes, such as preparing the hall for worship and creating banners reflecting the Fruits of the Spirit. At present however, there are few opportunities for children to plan and lead worship for themselves, this limits their ability to contribute to the evaluation of worship effectively and so reduces its impact.

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

The strong but sensitive leadership of the head teacher and senior members of staff have effectively overseen the successful amalgamation of the church infant school with the junior school. Carefully, the Christian ethos has been developed from grassroots upwards. Visioning days with parents make them aware of what a church school is. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school where each child is unique and special to God. This is reflected in the support and provision for disadvantaged children, who through careful mentoring and further teaching are making as good progress as other children nationally. Not only does the school nurture the well being of the children, this extends into excellent relationships with parents and support for them when needed. Parents say that the staff live by these values, go the extra mile for the children and have a real interest in their needs. Parents feel valued as individuals and commend the school highly. Since the last inspection the ethos committee is monitoring the school's effectiveness. They have reviewed the school's Christian distinctiveness and put in actions which enhance this. The contribution made by the children's worship group is another example of this. Staff hold discussions with the children about the impact that RE has on their lives and other issues. The school has invested significantly in further training, drawing upon Diocesan expertise to support the amalgamation, as well as shaping the quality of RE teaching across the school. As a lead school in the locality, Bluecoat supports others in a number of areas. It is a recognised Early Years Teaching Centre and is active in sharing expertise with other providers. Good links have been established with the local church which has arranged for children to have hands on experiences regarding the life and worship that the church offers. Church governors take an active but also challenging role in the direction of the school. The new vicar is already contributing to the provision which the school offers. Being involved with the community is an important part of the school's work and it plays a significant role in local events, such as the 'Big Sing'; helping to create a sense of community within the town. Children, parents and staff are proud to be part of this caring Christian community.

SIAMS report February 2016 Great Torrington Bluecoat Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Great Torrington EX38 7NV