



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Corfe Castle Church of England Primary Academy

East Street
Corfe Castle
Wareham
Dorset
BH20 5EE

Previous SIAMS grade: Not previously inspected as an academy

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 27 April 2016

Date of last inspection: 5 December 2011

School's unique reference number: 142145

Head of school: Emma Morgan

Executive headteacher: Nigel Beckett

Inspector's name and number: Patricia Morris 626

School context

Corfe Castle is a smaller than average primary school with 96 children on roll. It serves the local village and wider rural community. The majority of children are of white British heritage. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of children supported by pupil premium is also below the national average. Following local authority reorganisation, the school became a primary school in September 2012. There have been significant changes over the past year both in leadership and in joining with two other church schools to become part of a multi academy trust. The head of school and chair of governors have been in post since September 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Corfe Castle CE Primary Academy as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values are explicit and contribute to children's positive behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Strong relationships based on Christian values help create a strong community spirit within a Christian environment that ensures each child is valued and supported.
- Effective support from the Multi Academy Partnership, based on a Church of England foundation, is helping to move the school forward.

Areas to improve

- Strengthen the role of foundation governors by planning opportunities to monitor the Christian character more formally to enable them to challenge and support the leadership and management of the school as a church school more effectively.
- Develop more rigorous systems to regularly gather and evaluate high quality evidence that identifies priorities to move worship forward.

- Extend opportunities to experience spirituality in the outside environment to enhance the development of children's overall spiritual awareness.

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

The Christian character of the school is good because Christian values are clearly expressed and children identify how they affect their daily lives and achievements. Children say, 'Christian values bring us together and help us to sort out situations'. The impact of values is apparent in the positive learning environment and high quality care given to children. They impact on the way children treat each other and show respect for adults. Values are underpinned by the school motto of 'Nurture, Inspire, Achieve'. Relationships between all members of the school community are consistently linked to values and the impact is reflected in children's good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Parents comment on the marked improvement in behaviour as a result of Christian values. They speak positively about the Christian character of the school and feel that the school is being 'taken in the right direction with Christian values every bit as important as the curriculum'. Christian symbols are seen throughout the school and colourful displays reflect how children's work is valued and celebrated. For example, children are enthusiastic about quotes from the Bible that they have illustrated and displayed around the school. Children have a good understanding of spirituality saying, 'it's what's inside you that makes you different' and 'when you see something and think 'wow!'" Reflection areas and the recently introduced reflection journals make a valuable contribution to children's growing awareness of spirituality and give opportunities to reflect on how Christian teachings can help them to lead their lives. To enhance the opportunities to reflect and develop children's spiritual awareness, an outdoor spiritual garden is being planned. Religious education (RE) promotes children's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and children appreciate the importance of showing respect for other religions. Children are enthusiastic and engaged in RE lessons. Prior learning is reflected in the knowledgeable answers they give to challenging questions. Spiritual links in RE give children an appreciation of their own lives in comparison to others. This is reflected in the way children talk about how they support national and global charities such as Sports Relief and a shoe box appeal as well as the local hospice. Increasingly strong links with the local community is resulting in raising the profile of the school as a church school. The choir are especially good ambassadors through their regular participation in community events.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of school life. The whole school ethos is enriched by worship and the impact is evident in children's attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Worship is thoroughly planned to support values and includes stories from the Bible enabling children to make links between Jesus' teachings and their own lives. Planning is well supported through the 'Roots and Fruits' scheme that has recently been implemented. Worship contributes positively to the development of children's spirituality. For example, an awe and wonder display based on the hymn 'All things bright and beautiful' supports children's understanding of the world around them. Similarly, a display based on the 'Mirror, Window, Doors' concept successfully contributes to children's developing spirituality. Children explained enthusiastically that it helps them 'learn about the world we live in and show compassion for others'. Children speak positively about the contrasting approaches from different leaders of worship that they recall, appreciating the variety of stimulating experiences. Through reflection time, children develop an awareness that they are part of God's family. Parents say that 'children are excited by links with the church' and that it reflects the sense of community. Children have a comprehensive knowledge of the church year and the main Christian festivals that are celebrated in the local church which are well attended by families. The rector values the mutual inspiration that the school and church offer each other. Prayer is a natural part of children's lives in school. It is highly valued and children understand that it can be used to say thank you, ask for help or

forgiveness. They are proud of the prayer trees in classrooms and are well supported in writing their own prayers through 'prayer starter prompts'. Children talk enthusiastically about how they light three candles in worship and hold one of the many crosses to show that 'God is with us in the room'. Children have explored the Trinity in depth and show a good understanding saying 'God can exist in three different ways'. They are taking increasing responsibility for particular aspects of worship. The recently initiated 'Ignite' group are very enthusiastic to further develop their ability in planning worship. Some feedback on worship is gathered informally but a more formal monitoring and evaluation system has yet to be developed to more effectively identify further improvements.

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

The new head of school has been in post for two terms and has worked very hard to ensure the Christian character of the school has a higher profile amidst a challenging time as a result of the many changes that have taken place. A distinct vision is promoted based on Christian values and leaders clearly articulate the impact of these values on children and on the whole life of the school. There is a coherent understanding of the school's performance and areas for development have been identified to move the school forward. Becoming part of a multi academy trust of three church schools is proving to be beneficial through the sharing of good practice and mutual support. Governors are highly committed to the school although foundation governors have yet to develop more formal strategies to challenge and support the leadership and management of the school as a church school. Leaders ensure that worship and RE are informed by distinctive Christian values that contribute positively to children's good behaviour, attitudes and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The newly appointed RE co-ordinator understands how RE is based on the school's Christian values and is enthusiastic to ensure it has a high profile within the school and wider community. Work scrutiny and evaluation of RE are in place but this is informal. Leaders are aware that a more formal and systematic way to monitor and evaluate the subject needs to be developed. There are very good relationships between the school and the local church and increasing opportunities for working within the local community. The school is well supported by the Diocese who have effectively guided them during the recent changes. Parents say they are fully informed through newsletters and that questionnaires give them opportunities to give their views. They speak highly of the head of school whom they feel is building on previous strong foundations. There is an appreciation of the strong support from staff who 'have time for children and give them a sense of self-worth'. This has been especially important over the past year when a number of family bereavements have taken place with staff having been 'incredibly supportive'. As one parent stated, 'the support showed me how much community spirit exists in the school and has touched my heart'. Parents particularly value the appointment of an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) from whom they say support has been excellent. Parents believe this positive caring ethos based on Christian values has brought 'the soul back into the school' and that their children are valued as individuals and 'genuinely learn life skills for the future through the Christian faith'. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

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