



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



 The Methodist Church

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Harbertonford Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Old Road
Harbertonford
TQ9 7TA

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon

Date of inspection: 5th March 2014

Date of last inspection: 2nd October 2008

School's unique reference number: 113462

Headteacher: Janet Ronson

Inspector's name and number: Patricia Morris 626

School context

Harbertonford is a smaller than average sized primary school with 70 children on roll. The school federated with five other village primary schools in November 2011 to form the Totnes Federation of Village Schools. There is a shared governing body with six individual headteachers. The school is set in a rural position outside Totnes. Most children are of white British origin. The number of children with special educational needs is higher than the Devon average but below the national average. The proportion of children eligible for pupil premium is below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Harbertonford as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding Christian ethos of the school in which all children are highly valued as individuals.
- Relationships within the school which are based on Christian values which encourage and challenge the children.
- The vision, drive and commitment of the headteacher and staff in ensuring the positive impact of the school's Christian ethos.

Areas to improve

- Provide greater opportunities for children to be more regularly involved in the planning and presentation of worship to encourage a feeling of ownership.
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of worship diaries to identify how well they contribute to children's spiritual growth as they progress through the school.
- Ensure an overview role to maintain the Christian distinctiveness of the school remains as the federation develops and the make up of the governing body evolves.

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 Christian values such as forgiveness, compassion and peace, are firmly embedded in every aspect of school life and these are reflected in the excellent behaviour of the children and their achievements. The school's mission statement is prominently displayed around the school and values are clearly visible. The values are apparent in the school's warm, welcoming, inclusive and friendly atmosphere. Younger children are able to talk confidently about the current value of justice while the older children know and are proud of the values decided upon for the whole year and were able to give examples of them in the Bible through Jesus' teaching. This impacts on the children's self esteem and they believe they are valued as individuals and so therefore value themselves. Children stated that values 'help us to behave in the right way' and 'guide us to be good people'. Parents say that children have a deep understanding of these values because they are exposed to them and taught to think about them in so many different ways, resulting in them 'blossoming as individuals in a Christian environment'. This is reflected in the good attendance and the mutually caring relationships within the school community. Staff have good knowledge of individual children's needs and talents. This was strongly confirmed when talking with parents who stated that staff work extra hard and care deeply about each individual in their care. Cohorts are small so attainment varies year on year but children's attitudes towards learning are very positive and one child said, 'Every day I have a new challenge'. The whole school celebrates each child's achievements. For example, on the morning of the inspection a group of children had been out to a gymnastics competition which they had won and, on their return, they instinctively visited each class, certain that every child in the school would want to share in their success. There is a highly developed understanding of spirituality with planned and progressive opportunities for children to engage in and develop their experiences. Children's spiritual development is enhanced by the excellent and creative use of the school environment. For example, strategically placed artefacts and mirrors placed in reflection areas in every classroom are valued by the children who speak enthusiastically about these areas and say they can sit quietly to calm down or think about God. Circle times and worship diaries also enable children to ask questions and relate each value to their daily life. As a result children feel able to express their thoughts and feelings with confidence and progress is shown in the deeper reflections of the older children who are forming their own ideas and extending their curiosity. Children's understanding of diverse cultures is enhanced through a wide variety of visitors such as a local Buddhist and visits to a synagogue. They have many opportunities to identify similarities and differences between faiths. Observations of lessons confirm that spirituality is at the heart of the teaching with children being given time to reflect.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is highly valued and central to the life of the school. Children recognise that worship is a time of 'coming together to think about God, learn about values and share prayers'. Themes are linked extremely well to the school's values. For example, the worship observed was based around Fair trade and the current value of justice which successfully linked with attitudes to fairness found in everyday life. There are clear links within the worship with previous Bible stories and the children could make relevant references to events that had happened in school. Children appreciate a reflection time as part of worship and one child shared his own very thoughtful reflection with the rest of the school. There is an awareness of the Trinity and a simple understanding of what this means. Prayers are said throughout the school day and are an important part of school life. A prayer box in the hall is used regularly by the children to write their own prayers to ask for help for others and these are read out weekly in the celebration assembly, placed on a display board and passed on to members of the church prayer group. Good awareness is shown of the pattern of the church calendar with major Christian festivals being held in the church such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Children are familiar with some aspects of Anglican tradition such as communion and talked

confidently about the significance of the bread and the wine. Children enjoy participating in collective worship and are keen to take on more responsibility of certain aspects. Parents believe worship impacts positively on the children by allowing them to 'develop their own belief'. Planning is good and staff and clergy are regularly involved in leading worship. Regular monitoring takes place in the form of worship diaries which inform future planning but there also needs to be more formal evaluation. This is reflected in the children's good behaviour, enthusiasm and the expectant way in which they listen and participate. Children have positive attitudes towards worship and have a good understanding of the significance of lighting the candle, singing to praise God and having a quiet time in worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Children state that religious education (RE) is important to them. They enjoy lessons, are inspired by the subject and learn well. Achievement in RE compares favourably with other core subjects and by the time children leave the school attainment is at least in line with national expectations with many children attaining higher. The overall quality of teaching and learning, taking into consideration the lessons observed during the inspection and the school's own accurate observations, is outstanding. Teachers were encouraging children to consider and ask 'big questions' relating to faith and belief. They also allow time for children to reflect on their own experiences and to be imaginative in their responses. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and highly skilled questioning extends children's thinking skills, whatever their level, giving excellent opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills to their own personal reflections and extend children's curiosity. Children were seen to engage enthusiastically to discussions and share their opinions openly and with confidence. Opportunities were seen for children to make links between the beliefs and practices in Buddhism and the schools' own Christian values. A wide range of learning opportunities are apparent from the creative displays around the school which include shadow puppets, plays, photos, art and presentations. Reflection time for children is planned into the curriculum at the end of a topic. Well planned regular monitoring systems including observations of lessons, work scrutiny and child conferencing, results in well focused action plans in the school improvement plan where RE is given a high priority in order to impact on standards. There is thorough assessment and data is used to effectively track children's progress with standards being well monitored. The contribution RE makes to the overall Christian ethos of the school is excellent. RE is well resourced and the syllabus covers a very good range of explicit teaching in Christianity as well as opportunities for children to learn about other major world religions. All staff have had training on spiritual development and the co-ordinator has attended a variety of training as well as leading staff meetings when the need arises.

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

Leadership and management are outstanding because Christian values are firmly placed at the heart of all the school does and values such as justice and compassion inform all decision making processes and underpin key policies. The headteacher has an excellent understanding of how the Christian ethos makes a difference to the lives of the children and has lead the school community in creating an environment in which Christian values are lived out every day. Central to this vision is the quality of relationships that exist throughout the school ensuring that children feel safe and are highly valued as individuals. The positive impact this makes on the Christian character of the school is well supported through a termly focus from the 'Windows, Mirrors and Doors' scheme which is used throughout the school as well as the implementation of the Salisbury Spiritual Development programme. The school has very good links with the local church through the celebration by the school of major Christian festivals and the use of the clergy, who are closely involved in the life of the school, for relevant aspects of the RE syllabus. Children state that they feel 'at home' in church. Many of the governors have strong church commitments and the newly formed School Ethos Committee, which

includes some governors, monitor the Christian character of the school through regular meetings. Self evaluation procedures are well established and accurately identify areas for future development. Issues for development from the previous report have been fully addressed. Children and parents say their views are taken into consideration and this is apparent through regular questionnaires and the school's 'open door' policy. Parents particularly feel that their children are well prepared for future life. They say that the community feel and the nurturing environment mean that children are happy, safe and secure and this impacts on their learning. They acknowledge that concerns are dealt with effectively and promptly and that staff are supportive. Religious education and collective worship make a very effective contribution to the Christian character.

SIAMS report March 2014 Harbertonford CE VA Primary School Harbertonford TQ9 7TA