



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Brent Knoll Church of England Primary School

Brent Knoll

Somerset

TA9 4EQ

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 21 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 9 June 2011

School's unique reference number: 123808

Headteacher: Chris Burman

Inspector's name and number: Jean Welch

Quality assurance: Lyn Field NS 151

School context

Brent Knoll Church of England Primary is a small rural village school. It is currently a five class school with 135 pupils on roll. The headteacher has been at the school since Easter 2014. The proportion of special educational needs pupils is higher than average. The school has grown significantly in number in the past couple of years and is now full to capacity. A high percentage of the children come from outside the direct catchment area. The overwhelming majority of children are from White British backgrounds.

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

- All pupils are nurtured and valued highly because of the outstanding Christian ethos of the school.
- Pupils' engagement with Christian values and Bible stories results in a mature spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding of issues in their daily lives.
- The clear overriding Christian vision of the school, using their mission statement, informs all aspects of the school's work.
- Strong relationships and caring staff, who value each child as unique in the eyes of God, inspire the pupils to become 'the best they can be'.

Areas to improve

- Increase opportunities for pupils across the school to plan, deliver and evaluate worship so that their leadership skills are enhanced.
- Ensure the formal systematic aspect of monitoring is sufficiently robust to support the leaders in strategic planning for the future.

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

This school is a very effective and supportive community with Christian values intrinsic in all aspects of its work. An ethos working party (EWP), with members from across the school community, is now in place. This has resulted in virtually everyone being able to explain why the school has Christian values at the heart of its mission statement. Love of learning, faith, respect and partnership are the school's four core values and are deeply embedded in the life of the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how these values make an impact on their personal development and learning. For example, one child wrote 'we are passionate about our Christian values' and another said 'we are always thankful for what we have and the good things that happen to us'. They talk enthusiastically about the school and say they enjoy their learning and feel valued. Relationships and behaviour in the school are excellent, pupils saying that adults care for them and they feel safe. Consequently, the children can discuss worries or problems with members of staff knowing they are respected and their concerns will be dealt with fairly. The school works hard to develop awareness of the range of cultures in Britain and around the world. Parents are grateful for the excellent pastoral care shown to their children, particularly after moving from another school. They highly value and support the school's Christian ethos and inclusive approach as a natural way of life. Differences between people are respected and everyone is fully included. For example one pupil said 'we learn about God and Jesus' acceptance of who we are no matter where we are from, what colour we are and what religion we are'. The Christian value of responsibility brings the whole community together in local and global charity projects. For example the EWP pupils organised and encouraged the school to take part in a Christmas shoe box appeal. Achievements of all types are celebrated and linked to the core values; as a result the children's self-esteem is high. Vibrant and exciting religious education (RE) teaching contributes to a high degree of respect for and understanding of diverse cultures and other faith communities. This produces a tolerant, loving and caring school community, valuing themselves and others in the world around them. RE and collective worship are high profile, leading to significantly improving the impact of Christian values within the school. The broad and enriching curriculum provides the pupils with a wealth of experiences and opportunities, successfully developing all aspects of SMSC. High aspirations, the school's holistic approach and values-led curriculum ensure a significant impact on the attainment of all, including the more vulnerable groups of pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils speak of worship with enthusiasm. The local vicar fully supports the school in planning and leading worship. Acts of collective worship draw on Bible teaching and stories as well as Christian and British values. Bible story messages go well beyond the school gates, prompting discussion at home. The pupils articulate how the school's core values have roots in the Bible and impact their own lives. One child wrote 'Jesus said "love your neighbour as you love yourself" so we must be kind to each other'. Pupils' voice is important and the school council a valued asset. For example the EWP pupils initiated a competition to identify the school's understanding of 'a feeling of belonging'. This deepens the children's appreciation of what it really means to belong to a church school. Both children and adults talk enthusiastically about their experience of worship. Governors attend worship regularly and give informal and formal feedback to the headteacher. Prayer is important to the school, children actively participating on a daily basis. Every child receives a Bible

of their own from a local Christian trust when they enter school. The children value this gift and use their Bibles regularly in school. Reflection and prayer areas are established around the school and are well used by the pupils. They say it helps to have a place to reflect on the Bible and write their own prayers in a book. These show the connections they make between Christian values and daily life. Leaders from a range of church traditions make worship memorable and consistently capture pupils' interest. Consequently, pupils talk confidently about the person of Jesus and of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The school acknowledges the need for more pupil opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate worship. The church is regularly used by the school to celebrate main Christian festivals during the year. Through these services, supported by parents, pupils become familiar with Anglican traditions. Ascension day worship, on top of Brent Knoll, was a significant event which really inspired the children. One child said 'it was awesome when a balloon was released to represent Jesus going up to heaven'. The multi-faceted learning arising from this experience is outstanding and pupils articulate their growing understanding of faith and the importance of the Trinitarian nature of God. The sense of spirituality in the school is clearly encouraged by experiences which engender awe and wonder.

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

The leadership puts great value on the many strengths of this effective church school and is firmly committed to its ongoing development. The school's Christian values are explicit in all documents. There are systems in place which accurately identify future areas for development. Governors are fully aware that they need to continually update monitoring and evaluating procedures. Barriers to children's learning are identified and support put in place as appropriate. Wise decisions have been made to employ teaching assistants who have significantly helped raise standards of all pupils over the past 12 months, particularly those with special educational needs. The reflective leadership of the school is highly effective because its Christian character directly informs strategic planning. Consequently, all the staff have clear expectations in leading collective worship, and RE teaching is linked to SMSC development of every learner. The leadership team is committed to and enthusiastic about raising standards in achievement and progress, clearly linking them to Christian values. The statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. RE is well led, planned and taught. Support and advice from the diocese has been invaluable in providing high quality professional development and succession planning. In particular the diocesan course on Christian distinctiveness made a valuable contribution to the strategic planning process. The understanding that each child is uniquely made in the image of God underpins the creative curriculum with Christian values. School/church links are exemplary, resulting in the provision of excellent opportunities for interaction between them and the wider village community. Parents and carers feel valued and appreciate the efforts made to keep them informed of parish events and services. The school is committed to working with its neighbouring middle and secondary feeder schools in providing a positive transition experience for leavers in Year 4 and Year 6. The leadership and management team are well placed to take the school forward and face the challenges of the future.

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