

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Moor Lane  
Budleigh Salterton  
Devon  
EX9 6QF

#### Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon  
Date of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008  
Date of last inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> September 2005  
School's unique reference number: 113425  
Headteacher: Mrs Sally Roberts  
Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett 201

#### School context

St Peter's is a larger than average size primary school of 261 children who mainly come from the town. The socio-economic background of the children is varied. The majority of children are of a white British heritage. The proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average but with an above average number of children with statements.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Peter's as a Church of England school are good

The more explicit links between the school's aims and their impact on the daily life in the community has made the Christian distinctiveness of St Peter's far clearer in the last year. This has helped create a Christian community that has the confidence to continue to explore what it really means to be a church school.

#### Established strengths

- A strong Christian character that is evident in all aspects of school life.
- A strong leadership that ensures the Christian ethos maintains a high profile.
- Collective worship that is central to the life of the school.

#### Focus for development

- Develop the school community's understanding of the deeper spiritual awareness of individuals.
- Use assessment data in RE to identify and inform progress.
- Involve foundation governors in the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's Christian character.

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

Since the last inspection the school has moved forward significantly in their understanding of what it means to be a church school. This is particularly evident in the greater emphasis being placed on really bringing alive the messages in collective worship so that they permeate throughout the school. The distinctive ethos of the school has grown from the way in which its Christian character and the needs of the whole child are woven together. In

achieving this there is a greater awareness of the place of spirituality in the lives of both children and adults. Indeed this aspect is now regarded as a crucial part of the school ethos. Progress in this area has been especially strong during the past year with the arrival of the new headteacher. Although the school has not yet agreed a final policy for spiritual development, as identified in the last report, the school has arrived at the point where there is a shared understanding of the importance of spirituality and a great willingness to move forward. A draft policy very successfully captures the spirit of the school's approach to spiritual development. Children speak with confidence when talking about their beliefs and opinions and listen with appreciation to each other as they explore issues of faith. They treat each other with respect and sensitivity because that is the way they are treated. Children's attitudes towards learning are very good because the activities presented to them are stimulating and creative. This motivates them to do their best and as a result they enjoy their learning. Children feel safe in the school environment because they know that teachers are there for them if they need help or support.

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

Collective worship is outstanding at St Peter's because the impact of what the children learn from the teachings of Jesus makes a real difference to their lives. Younger children explain how the messages that they hear encourage them to love one another and "to make things right". Older children express this as acts of worship giving them opportunities to experience things at a deeper level. All children agree that what really makes the message memorable is the way they are delivered. That collective worship is an integral part of the school day and relevant to the children is evidence that worship themes are specifically and successfully adapted to meet their needs. For example, the theme of forgiveness has been used to give children an understanding of how they can deal with friendship problems in the play ground. It is this practical application of the school's Christian ethos to real aspects in the children's lives that gives acts of worship their crucial place in the school day. Acts of worship are explicitly Christian in nature and the school ensures that they are also Anglican in tradition. Prayer is a normal part of life at the school and children talk about it openly and comfortably. Their understanding of prayer is very good which is evident in the profound things they say when expressing their views. For example, one child explained how God feels sad and disappointed when humans fail. Another child responded that "God will still forgive us if we really mean it". The quality of acts of worship is high. Planning is thorough. Children experience a wide range of worship styles. The local vicar regularly leads acts of worship and he is complemented by clergy from other Christian traditions who are also made welcome in the school. The school visits the local church to celebrate the major Christian festivals and this helps to give children an understanding of their importance in the Christian year. The school's commitment to the parish church is reflected in a regular family service which is lead by the headteacher and children together.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Children make good progress in RE and by the time they leave the school standards are in line with national expectations. The overall quality of teaching seen was good. Children are focussed on the tasks in hand because a range of learning strategies are used and carefully differentiated work ensures all children are included in their learning. For example, in one lesson with a mixed age group, the very youngest children were able to explain the significant parts of the Christmas story, showing their understanding through drama and play. A good level of challenge provides opportunities for children to explore and express their views and opinions about issues of faith and belief. The enthusiasm with which they respond is a reflection of the positive attitudes children have towards RE. It is also seen in the quality of the questions that they ask. This was observed in a good KS2 lesson when the children generated more questions than they answered because of the encouragement from the teacher. The acquisition of a wider vocabulary, together with confidence from teachers to tackle complicated concepts, will enable children to become more deeply engaged in

discussion of spiritual matters and help them to find ways to answer their own questions. The frequent changes in Coordinator and a recently introduced scheme of work have largely meant that the opportunity has not been there to achieve this. However, procedures have moved forward and information from existing assessments should provide the school with the necessary data that can be used to inform future development and trends with more effective tracking of progress.

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

The headteacher's strong leadership and commitment has made a significant difference to the church status of the school. Working with the school community in a relatively short time, she has successfully enhanced the profile of the school's Christian ethos by ensuring that it is more visible in the life of the school. The impact on the children's learning and personal development is more explicit and a greater understanding of the links between collective worship and life in the school means that the school's Christian aims are a living and crucial part of the school's character. This is reflected in the outstanding grades given to the collective worship and Christian character sections of this report. The headteacher is clear about what needs to be done to take the school forward. In recognising that a greater depth to the spiritual experiences of both children and adults will make an impact in all areas of school life, the school demonstrates a very good capacity to improve. The headteacher works closely with the chair of governors, who is also the local vicar. This relationship ensures that the Christian character of the school remains at the forefront of school development. Together they have accurately evaluated the impact of the Christian ethos but recognise that there should be greater involvement of other governors in this process. Foundation governors are committed to their role and support the school well in promoting its Christian distinctiveness. They understand that more involvement in self evaluation will give them a better understanding of how the ethos has an impact on the children. The vicar fulfils his different roles very well and has a clear distinction between his role as chair of governors and as a pastoral leader. He is a very familiar figure in the school equally well known to both children and parents. In particular he makes sure that the school's Christian ethos maintains a distinctive Anglican character. Links with the wider church are good and there are also profitable links with other Christian traditions. The RE Coordinator is passionate about the subject and has a personal philosophy that is reflected in the way that RE is perceived as a special part of the curriculum. He has recently been appointed to the post but is already clear about how to take the subject forward and particularly the central part it can play in encouraging greater depth of spiritual development. He is eager to expand his role so that he can increase his contribution in helping develop the impact of the school's Christian character. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the Christian ethos. They appreciate that the Christian ethos is an important part of what makes the school the success that it is and consider quite rightly that their children are highly valued and that the school has a high regard for each individual's personal dignity. Parents agree that the headteacher has made a big difference particularly in the way that she is approachable and listens seriously to their views.