



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### St Peter's C of E VA Primary School

Moor Lane  
Budleigh Salterton  
Devon  
EX9 6QF

**Diocese: Exeter**

Local authority: Devon

Dates of inspection: 4 February 2014

Date of last inspection: 10 December 2008

School's unique reference number: 113425

Acting Headteacher: Malcolm Elliott

Inspector's name and number: John Rudge (704)

#### School context

St Peter's has a school population of 273. Pupils are mainly from a white British background, including a below average number with statements of educational need. Over recent years there have been significant changes of staff and governors, and the school currently continues under the leadership of the acting headteacher. The school has close links with St Peter's parish church, whose newly appointed incumbent is active in the life of the school.

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

- Identified Christian values are well established at the core of the school's academic and spiritual life, and have a positive impact on pupils' achievements and spiritual development
- Pupils understand the Christian basis of the school's ethos through a well-targeted programme of religious education and collective worship
- The quality of relationships within the school makes pupils confident and enthusiastic in their learning
- A strong sense of common purpose and Christian distinctiveness continues to characterise the school, in spite of an extended period of instability and changing personnel

#### Areas to improve

- Build on the school's policy for spiritual development to ensure that its Christian character and values have a pervasive impact on all learners

- Ensure that the very high quality of teaching in some religious education lessons is extended for the benefit of all pupils
- Ensure that the foundation governors exercise their full responsibility in promoting and evaluating the school's Christian ethos and distinctiveness

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

The school's distinctive Christian character is evident in the central place given to its core values. These values are treated as both universal and inclusive, though Christian in focus. These are prominently displayed, including in the developing science garden area, and widely discussed. The school-wide preparation process, which led to the selection of the chosen values, appears to have underscored pupils' commitment to recognising their importance and understanding their relevance to their learning. As a result, the school's ethos has a strong impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Likewise, behaviour in school, both generally and in lessons, is good, and encouraged through caring relationships with teaching, support and other school staff. Whilst pupils understand the central place of Christian faith within the life of the school, they are well aware of, and show openness towards, and enjoy celebrating, the traditions of people who come from backgrounds different from their own. They also take part enthusiastically in the school's efforts to express care in the local and wider community and understand the religious and moral reasons for doing so. Close relationships with the parish church and its incumbent and staff help to strengthen pupils' awareness of the school's distinctiveness. Through various charitable and cultural activities, such as the community larder and musical events, the school enjoys a prominent role in the local community. Evidence from surveys also confirms that there is strong parent support for the Church school ethos, including among those who are not regular churchgoers. Since the previous report, the school has moved forward in fulfilling some of the aspirations of its spirituality policy, emphasising the welfare and progress of the whole child. Consequently, the school has a strong influence on pupils' spiritual development, and is committed to building further on this.

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

Collective worship is a prominent and central feature of the school day. Its overall quality is good and it contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual development. The weekly pattern of collective worship means that pupils experience times for reflection in different educational contexts. The policy which relates to it helps to ensure that a number of supportive activities, such as the use of prayer trees in classrooms, times for more informal prayer and reflection, including within the staff, are experienced as a natural part of the school's community life. This is further supported through the active involvement of local clergy and Christian leaders and through regular worship of the parish church, in which pupils take part. These factors all help to simulate awareness of the school's Church foundation. Pupils enjoy collective worship and participate in it enthusiastically, because it provides a focus for, and reflection on, the whole day and relates activities in worship to their own lives. It is presented within an educational context, addressing the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. It is well planned and follows a regular pattern which pupils understand. Following training from the Diocese, the school plans collective worship around the celebration of the Church's year, core Christian teachings and beliefs, and the school's own values. The activities of collective worship are varied and stimulating, drawing on the school's creative ethos, such as the music provided by the worship band. They also reflect the traditions of Anglican worship. These factors, taken together, provide a firm basis on which the school's sense of direction and purpose are built. This contributes widely to pupils' spiritual development. Informal feedback and evaluation help to stimulate the regular planning of collective worship. The school is aware of the need for more formal review and monitoring, especially by the Governing Body, and for the greater involvement of pupils in the presentation of the activities of collective worship.

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

Pupils make good progress in religious education (RE), in line with their achievement in the curriculum as a whole, and their level of attainment is good. A recent change in the leadership of RE, combining it with leadership of collective worship, has ensured that there is a clear emphasis in the school on helping pupils to understand the Christian foundation of its values in the teaching of Jesus. Some pupils are able to explain at a basic level why, for example, the quality and meaning of love, in a Christian context, is different from the way the word is often used in everyday life and, at a more profound level, why it is the value which underpins all the other core values. The newly-appointed subject leader has made an imaginative and refreshing impact on the planning and teaching of the curriculum, building on previous progress, with a strong emphasis on making the subject interesting and relevant to pupils. Teaching and learning in RE is good overall, providing a sound basis for extending the outstanding quality of some teaching throughout the school. This begins in the integrated context of the school's Early Years provision. Consequently, pupils take part enthusiastically in lessons, ask perceptive questions and readily volunteer their own viewpoints. They receive a sound and wide-ranging foundation in Christian teaching, which gives further support to understanding the themes, values and ideas promoted through collective worship. At the same time, they have acquired a healthy awareness of people from varying religious communities. Some outstanding teaching was observed during the visit, incorporating best practice and stimulating engagement with pupils. Greater rigour has been introduced into the assessment of RE. The school is aware that further development is needed to bring the quality of assessment for learning and the effectiveness of tracking pupils' progress into line with the overall quality of assessment already embedded in the rest of the curriculum.

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

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection, in spite of extensive changes of personnel in challenging circumstances. The acting headteacher has brought much needed stability as well as leading forward the development of the school's ethos and distinctiveness. His policy of laying a firm foundation for further progress in the future development of the school's ethos has ensured that good practice from the past has been carried forward and that the school's leaders are working well together as a team with a shared sense of purpose. Leaders consult widely among stakeholders, including the pupils themselves and their parents, to monitor and evaluate progress. The leadership has addressed points for development in the previous report, and made some effective changes but also understands where further development is needed. Leaders have a clear sense of vision for the school and are rigorous in planning for the future. They have engaged with the Diocese to provide training and support in relation to collective worship and RE. A whole staff training day on the school's core values has provided an important stimulus to the school's collective vision. Consequently, the school has good potential to make further progress in developing its ethos. Changes in the governing body, and particularly among foundation governors, mean that the foundation governors have not been able to exercise their full responsibility for promoting, monitoring and evaluating the school's ethos, and the school is actively pursuing ways of bridging this gap.

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