



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Cranborne Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Water Street
Cranborne
Wimborne Dorset
BH215QB

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset
Dates of inspection: 6 June 2016
Date of last inspection: 6 May 2011
School's unique reference number: 113797
Headteacher: Lindsey Stevenson
Inspector's name and number: Marcia Headon 761

School context

Cranborne is a smaller than average first school of 127 pupils aged between four and nine. Over sixty percent of the children come from outside the catchment area and nearly twenty-five percent have transferred into the school at a time other than their normal admission age. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage and there are no children who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of children who have special educational needs or disabilities slightly is above the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding is below the national average.

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

- Deeply embedded Christian values exercise a strong influence on the attitudes of the pupils and the way they behave.
- The loving, caring and nurturing leadership of the headteacher has given a very clear vision and direction to the school.
- The commitment of the governors to improving the school and in preserving its strong Christian heritage is having a very positive influence upon the school.

Areas to improve

- Extend opportunities for pupils to become more involved in the planning and leading of collective worship so their understanding of worship deepens even more.
- Ensure that marking in religious education (RE) is consistent with the whole school policy and gives pupils guidance on how to improve their work.
- Develop pupils' knowledge of the other religions so that their understanding of the diversity of different faiths is deepened.

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

Cranborne First School absolutely fulfils its mission statement to 'cherish all, learn together and fly together'. Pupils are valued as individuals, their needs are carefully analysed and appropriate provision is made for them all within a strong Christian ethos. As a result, attainment is at least good in each year group and pupils make very good progress. A higher than average percentage of pupils reaches a good level of development by the end of Reception and attainment is higher than average in the Year 1 phonics test. Children with special educational needs make exceptionally strong progress. Pupils readily identify with and demonstrate the school's values of care, love, friendship, forgiveness and perseverance. They easily make links with Bible stories illustrating these. The impact of the values is seen in the high levels of support they give to one another and the responsibility which older pupils show towards younger ones. It is also shown by pupils nominating other pupils for mention in celebration worship when they have acted upon the values. Friendship and care is very important to pupils as was seen when they recognised one girl had been left out of a game and immediately ensured her inclusion. The social, moral and spiritual development of pupils is strongly enhanced by teaching in RE, collective worship and the Christian ethos of the school. Behaviour is exemplary with pupils showing courtesy and polite manners around the school. They know right from wrong and realise that no matter how difficult forgiveness can be, it is vitally important. They help those less fortunate by raising money for charity. Spiritual development is particularly strong with plenty of opportunities given for pupils to reflect. This is supported by the use of spiritual trees in each classroom where pupils hang their reflections and questions. These are then often used in other lessons. The school provides excellent support for parents who comment upon its family feel. The school is a happy community where excellent relationships exist. Although the pupils appreciate the need for tolerance for peoples of all faiths and none, they show less understanding of what cultural and religious differences really entail.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is an important part of the school day and everyone values the time to meet together, to be still and reflect and to offer praise and prayer to God. A serene and calm ambience is created by the use of music on entry and the lighting of a candle with a familiar prayer in which all join. The hall aids the atmosphere with its beautiful church like design of which the pupils are proud. Worship is very carefully planned by the headteacher and explores themes linked very appropriately to the school's values, thus reinforcing and extending them. Christian festivals are celebrated and on these occasions collective worship is often held in the local church. This develops pupils' understanding of the meaning of these events. Bible stories are always used, along with a reflection, singing and prayer which helps to develop pupils' knowledge of the teachings of Jesus. Pupils particularly enjoy worship led by the Open the Book team from the local church. They join in enthusiastically, feeling very closely involved with the stories. However, pupils play a greater role in leading class and celebration worship than whole school worship. Local clergy regularly lead whole school collective worship even in the current interregnum and this ensures pupils experience a variety of forms of worship. Pupils understand the importance of prayer in Christian life. Parents commented that children bring home and use daily prayer and grace before meals. They know different types of prayer as this was a theme in school collective worship. Most pupils know the Lord's Prayer as it is often revisited. However, although they write prayers, pupils are not involved in leading prayers in whole school collective worship. Children display a very good age appropriate understanding of the Trinity. The foundation governors regularly evaluate the impact of collective worship through surveys of pupils and staff and the results of these are highly positive.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education is very well planned. The curriculum has been carefully designed and incorporates elements from the Christianity project, the Dorset and Wiltshire Agreed syllabi, Judaism as well as good opportunities for spiritual development. It makes a major contribution to the lives of the pupils, who enjoy the subject greatly. They display excellent knowledge of Bible stories and show great enthusiasm in their lessons for the enquiry based approach which has been adopted. Teaching is good and at times outstanding. It is well linked to the values of the school. In a Year 3 lesson pupils were considering the story of the Lost Sheep and quickly made the connection with forgiveness and repentance. The quality of work produced is high and shows increased levels of understanding. For example, in a Year 4 book a pupil in response to the question 'if you were God would you give free choice?', had lucidly explained that given wars, fights, disagreements and the ecological disasters which man had created, God would be most unwise to do so but as 'He loves us He does'. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and currently they attain as well in this subject as in the core subjects. However, to date no moderation of work in RE has taken place with other schools. Marking is completed conscientiously but it does not follow the school policy in that there is not enough guidance given to pupils on how to improve. The RE leader has very good subject knowledge. She provides excellent guidance to other less experienced staff, monitors lessons and scrutinises pupils' work. She has very successfully led professional development days and her modelling of the creation story in Godly Play was seen by staff as a real turning point in their understanding of the Christianity project. Pupils are developing a good understanding of Judaism and older pupils are beginning to make comparisons and links. However, the sole focus on Judaism means pupils do not develop knowledge of other faiths.

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

The highly principled leadership of the headteacher means that the school has developed as a church school since the previous inspection. She shows exceptional care for all in the school and her aim that, when pupils look back later in life, they will see their years at Cranborne as a time of spiritual growth, is being realised. The school has a highly developed self-evaluation routine which means the strengths and weaknesses are accurately pinpointed and acted upon. The Christian distinctiveness is regularly reviewed and children, staff and parents are all invited to contribute to this. Evaluations are highly positive. Parents consider that the love of God is very evident in all the school does and that the values are life influencing in a very positive way. Governors are highly effective. They have reviewed their own role, which they take very seriously, questioning themselves deeply about how they can best uphold the Christian foundation. Through their Foundation Governor Group, they monitor, challenge and support the school very effectively. They are regular visitors to lessons, collective worship and they use their strengths very well. They have addressed the issues arising from the previous inspection although they are fully aware that there is still work to be done on diversity. The school has addressed the development of future leaders of church schools very conscientiously. Staff have had regular professional development on the teaching of RE and on spiritual development and both the headteacher, foundation governors and RE leader have attended courses run by the Diocese, with whom links are strong. Relationships with the local parish are very good. The school regularly visits the church and displays of pupils' work are on display there. Members of the church have maintained strong links with the school throughout the vacancy of the vicar. To encourage the pupils and their parents it has held all age services on Sundays in the four churches associated with the parish. This has been very successful. The school supports the church in social events such as maypole dancing displays at fetes. The school is also involved with a parish liaison project with a church in Wimborne. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.