



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Shipham Church of England VC First School

Turnpike Road  
Shipham  
Winscombe  
BS25 1TX

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Bath and Wells**

Local authority: **Somerset**

Dates of inspection: **02 December 2014**

Date of last inspection: **08 October 2009**

School's unique reference number: **123812**

Headteacher: **Mike Jory**

Inspector's name and number: **Jane Tibbs 226**

#### School context

Shipham Church of England First School is situated on the main road through the village of Shipham. The 47 pupils are organised into three classes in the mornings and two in the afternoons. The school is a member of the newly formed Mendip Edge Federation of three first schools and a middle school. Four governing bodies have combined to make one, over the federation. The headteacher has been in post since September and is a shared head with another church school in the federation.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shipham First School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Strong leadership, together with staff and governors promotes the Christian distinctiveness of this church school
- There is a strong emphasis on explicit Christian values which underpin school activities and the curriculum
- There are excellent relationships between the school, the church and the local community
- RE teaching is strong, and assessment provides evidence of pupils' attainment
- Every child is seen as an individual and the opinions of everyone in the school community are respected

#### Areas to improve

- Include pupil assessment in the evaluation and recording of acts of Collective Worship, in order to enrich the school's worship life
- Involve pupils in designing areas for prayer and reflection so they are enabled to explore in more depth their understanding of spirituality

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

Christian values are made explicit and are deeply embedded in the life of the school. The school's ethos of love and respect is highly valued by all stakeholders and enables pupils to feel secure. Achievement is acknowledged and celebrated and as a result all pupils feel affirmed and valued. Parents value the school's strong Christian foundation greatly, and commented that maintaining the Christian ethos was important when appointing the new headteacher and becoming a part of the new federation. The behaviour of pupils is outstanding because relationships between all members of the school community are exemplary and reflect the values of forgiveness and mutual respect. The atmosphere around the school is relaxed and orderly and so pupils enjoy being in school and want to work to their best. Pupils are excited and challenged by Religious Education (RE) because the teaching is good and are able to retell a variety of Bible stories, relating their significance to everyday life today. Pupils are also aware of what it means to be a church school and as a result are able to articulate clearly what the school's core values mean to them personally. The extent to which these values are linked to pupil's academic achievement, through expectations of how they will learn, contributes to their attainment which has been consistently above national averages. Bible stories and biblical principals are highlighted regularly in collective worship as well as RE to challenge pupils and to reinforce the school's Christian values. The School Council is going through a process of re-development, but the views of pupils are still heard through class representatives. Pupils choose the charities they wish to support and fund raising activities are organised, exemplifying the value of service. The grounds have been sensitively developed to enhance pupils' education including a Peaceful Place for reflection and other activities. Plans are in hand to further enhance the outdoor environment to complement the existing outdoor learning areas in order that pupils are able to experience, and participate in, a wider variety of activities.

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

Collective worship is outstanding because it is distinctly Christian in character, incorporates elements of Anglican tradition and is central to the life of the school. Pupils play an integral part in the organisation of worship which includes a candle lighting ceremony and ringing of a chime tree. Pupils enter and leave the hall in a calm and respectful way, are focussed and participate eagerly, singing with enthusiasm and listening attentively. Pupils' understanding of prayer is developing through opportunities to read prayers in worship and the development of class prayer books for use in worship. They are aware of the importance of prayer as communication with God, and confidently recite the Lord's prayer and school prayer. The value of thankfulness is understood when the children say grace before meals. The school's acts of Collective worship give pupils and staff outstanding opportunities for spiritual development. For example, following times of reflection, pupils are challenged to complete a task related to the worship. At the start of Advent, the challenge for pupils and staff was to write words connected with each of the Advent candles around a poster illustrating its meaning. Pupils are able to relate to previous worship when responding to questions and make appropriate comments. The Collective Worship policy has comprehensive aims and purpose and supports the school's distinctively Christian values. Staff are involved in the planning and delivery, and as a result pupils experience a variety of worship during the week, including input from visitors. The local Rector ensures that worship has a strong focus on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is recognised by pupils who are able to talk about the Trinity through reference to a variety of three-in-one images. His contribution is valued by the school community and is an example of the effective link with the parish church. Pupils regularly visit the church for worship and to celebrate the Christian festivals. Pupils are able to relate biblical material and Christian teaching to their own lives. For example, one pupil spoke lengthily about the parable of the Widow's Mite and how important it is to give what we can, without making a fuss, no matter how small a contribution.

Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship are clearly recorded but would benefit from the inclusion of more insight from pupils.

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

Governors and staff are committed to ensuring that there is a strong Christian ethos permeating all school activities. The Foundation Group enables the Christian voice to be heard within the Foundation, and the Shipham Advisory Group works closely with the headteacher, staff and governors. The new headteacher has worked quickly to ensure that the areas for development from the previous Inspection have been addressed and that there has been a smooth transition to the provision of a shared headteacher. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement, and staff and governors regularly articulate the impact of explicit Christian values on the lives of pupils and on the whole life of the school. The school values the views of all members of the school community and consults in times of change. The Shipham Advisory Group is a means of channelling the views and opinions of parents to the Governing Body and Federation. The headteacher aspires continually to raise standards and to achieve excellence. He is supported by the highly motivated staff team and governors, ensuring that Christian values are dominant and impact on all areas of school life, providing time for stillness, space, reflection and observation in a busy day. This has a positive impact on the well-being of pupils and adults in the school. This could be further enhanced by areas of reflection in classrooms, designed by pupils as an expression of their spirituality. There is an awareness of other cultures and faiths and pupils can identify some different features of Christian traditions and the church festivals. Clear Christian principals are expressed in policies and documentation. There is an effective team identity and the school benefits from an enthusiastic body of parental support. The commitment of the clergy to the school is strong and ensures that pupils are developing an awareness of what it means to be a person of faith in the community. Pupils are not embarrassed to discuss religion. One pupil commented, when discussing an ongoing project about the Romans, "The Romans worshipped many gods but we only worship one". Standards in religious education are high and well recorded. RE is given a high priority within the school's curriculum with skilfully planned lessons and learning outcomes achieved through well chosen activities which are stimulating and exciting. The RE subject leader is able to observe lessons and enable colleagues to record the progress made by pupils. There is outstanding support and challenge from a well-informed governing body which has recently taken the opportunity to monitor RE lessons and collective worship. The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.

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