

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Brixham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Higher Ranscombe Road  
Brixham  
Devon  
TQ5 9HF

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Exeter</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Devon
Date of inspection	18 May 2017
Date of last inspection	23 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 113390
Headteacher	Kerry Rushton
Inspector's name and number	Andrew Rickett 201

#### School context

Brixham is an average size primary school with 211 children on roll. The majority of children are from a White British heritage and a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average as is the number entitled to receive the pupil premium. Attendance for most children is in line with the national average. The headteacher was appointed in September 2016.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brixham CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values underpin the high quality of relationships throughout the school community and makes an increasing impact on the children's learning.
- Acts of worship make a valuable contribution to the children's appreciation of how Bible teaching helps them understand the Christian nature of their core values.
- The commitment of school leaders, particularly the work of the headteacher, ensures that the school is continually improving as a church school.

#### Areas to improve

Ensure that strong links between the school's vision and its core values give greater depth to the children's appreciation of 'living life to the full' by:

- Exploring in more detail the concept that underpins the school ethos so that it is more fully shared by all members of the school community and contributes to spiritual development.
- Developing the children's ability to ask and explore questions of meaning and purpose in greater depth.
- Ensuring that the vision and values underpin all areas of the curriculum so that they impact on the children's wellbeing and their learning.

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

The school has a set of six core values that are well established and known throughout the school community to reflect a distinctive Christian ethos. Children have an excellent understanding of these values and the difference they make to the quality of relationships they have with other children and adults in school. Young children possess a mature grasp, for their age, of values such as forgiveness and appreciate how it can sometimes be a difficult thing to do. Similarly, older children talk with considerable insight about how values help them in their lives. The school is currently looking at these values from a different perspective as they explore a new vision based on 'living life in all its fullness'. Developing links between the core Christian values and the new vision through key words, such as wisdom and dignity, are reinvigorating the school's discussions about what it means to be a church school. The recent exploration of these links through visual images, such as using the symbol of a tree as a metaphor, is helping children to gain a better understanding of the vision. Much of this is at an early stage and has yet to acquire greater depth before the connections between vision and values have a full impact on the children's and adults' wellbeing and learning, both within school and beyond. However, good progress is being made to help children understand what 'living life to the full' means to each of them personally. Religious education (RE) and collective worship are currently the main vehicles for exploring the vision and values and, although children engage in discussions with enthusiasm, they sometimes lack the breadth of knowledge and vocabulary to enable them to articulate their thoughts in depth. The extent to which these discussions inform other areas of the curriculum, and more directly impact on the children's learning, is still an area that has yet to be developed. However, children do well in their learning. They make progress with most groups attaining national expectations for their age. Relationships throughout the school community are a particular strength. The quality of pastoral support for children is excellent and the care for their needs by adults is exemplary. This creates an environment in which children say they are happy and enjoy coming to school because they make good friends and feel safe with their teachers. Indeed, the school is a place where children express their views on matters of faith and belief openly knowing that they will be listened to with respect. Children have a good awareness of the need to treat others with dignity regardless of who they are and often link this back to the teaching of Jesus. There is an implicit understanding of spirituality which, nevertheless, makes an important contribution to the children's personal development and their understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Links with a school in India are beneficial to both communities and, through its long standing commitment, a good example of the children's growing understanding of the importance of living life together. Religious education contributes to the children's growing awareness of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain and the need to show tolerance and respect for others. Children speak with conviction about treating others equally and 'respecting them for who they are'.

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

Acts of worship are distinctively Christian and based on Bible teaching that helps children appreciate how biblical teaching underpins the school's interpretation of their core values. Children are very clear that worship is a special time in the school day and a key aspect of what makes them a church school. They know that prayer and time to be still to reflect are important aspects of worship as they give them time to think about worship messages and think of God. Acts of worship are inclusive in nature. Children know that not everyone in the school may not believe in God but that this doesn't have to stop them learning from Bible stories. Indeed children are adamant that God listens to everyone's prayers, whether Christian or not, because 'He created everyone equally' and 'loves us all'. Collective worship promotes the school's distinctive Christian character and is currently helping the school community to explore its vision to live life to the full. The recent introduction of an evaluation of the impact of worship themes by children is giving greater feedback and evaluation of what works well and how it can be improved. This is relatively new and has yet to be adapted so that it fully meets the individual needs of the school's distinct vision. A variety of worship styles give children opportunities throughout the week to engage in worship in different ways. For example, Thinking Thursday encourages children to explore themes from a philosophical perspective which supports their moral and ethical understanding. Children are excited when asked difficult questions and rise to the challenge of expressing their ideas. An 'Open the Book' team regularly visits the school and contributes to the children's good knowledge of a range of Parables. They also give children opportunities to participate through drama. Children also contribute to leading worship on Fridays when the school council take responsibility for many aspects. Worship is Anglican in nature with words of welcome and responses accompanied by prayers and worship songs. Children have a good knowledge of major Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas many of which are celebrated in the local church. There are good opportunities to pray in collective worship and at other times in the school day. Children have a good grasp of the purpose of prayer and are both comfortable and confident to pray. They are developing their appreciation of the nature of the Trinity. Although three candles are lit at the start of worship, not all children understand their significance. Other children talk about the Holy Spirit and reflect on His presence and say 'but I still don't know how it all works?'

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

The headteacher has been instrumental in leading the school community in developing the Christian ethos so that it has greater meaning to children and adults alike. The school has made excellent progress since her appointment in September 2016 in leading the school to create a more challenging vision which is in the process of being explored. The work done so far to implement the new vision puts the school at a better place than at the time of the previous inspection as there is a clearer sense of direction and an excitement about the next steps. The headteacher has a very clear grasp of what needs to be done to continue to improve as a church school and is fully supported by staff and governors. The leadership and management together have a good capacity to achieve its goals as a church school. They understand, for example, that the links between vision and values needs to be stronger if they are to be fully embedded and make a greater difference to the children's wellbeing and learning both within school and beyond. The chair of governors has the full support of the governing body in promoting the direction that the school is taking as a church school and together they have a good awareness of the next steps to achieve this. In this regard, self-evaluation is accurate and honest and reflects the priorities in the current thorough action plan to develop the Christian ethos. A strong element of this is the extent to which the headteacher is using latest developments in church school leadership to support the direction the school is taking. At the root of this is regard for the Church of England's new vision for education. The RE subject leader is an important part of the ongoing implementation of the vision and values and ensures that RE makes a valuable contribution to their promotion. She also ensures that RE reflects current developments in the subject through the introduction of 'Understanding Christianity' materials which is providing greater challenge to both adults and children. The school has good links with local churches and benefits from the contributions of the local lay minister who regularly visits the school to offer pastoral support. The vicar supports the developments in church school distinctiveness and feels that it is growing stronger under the leadership of the current headteacher. The valuable contribution of an 'Open the Book' team, from the local Baptist church, to collective worship reflects the school's welcome to all Christian groups and equally those of other faiths. Parents feel that the school's values are a strong reflection of an explicitly Christian ethos and that they mirror the values and expectations they have at home. In particular, parents say that the school gives their children the opportunity to freely talk about faith and belief in an environment in which it is safe to do so. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report May 2017 Brixham CE VC Primary School Brixham TQ5 9HF