



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

### St Philip's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Bloomfield Rise  
Odd Down  
Bath  
BA2 2BN

**Diocese: Bath and Wells**

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

Local authority: Bath and North East Somerset

Dates of inspection: 15 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 24 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 109152

Headteacher: Andrew Joy

Inspector's name and number: Muriel Griffiths: NS 268

#### School context

Located on the outskirts of Bath, St Philip's Church of England Primary School is adjacent to the church of St Philip and St James and has 282 pupils on roll who come from the surrounding area. The proportion of children who have special educational needs is below the national average whilst the proportion with a statement is slightly above. The proportion of the pupils who receive support funded by the pupil premium is just below the national average. An increasing number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups a number of whom are in the early stages of learning English.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Philip's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The excellent leadership by the headteacher with a very strong sense of teamwork, equality and shared working among the whole school community, provides direction for the school's distinctive Christian character.
- Christian values underpin and have an evident impact on the school's approach to relationships, the wellbeing of pupils and learning attitudes.
- The school offers an environment where children are valued as individuals and where their talents are given every opportunity to flourish.

#### Areas to improve

- Share the school's core Christian values more fully with the wider school community so that parents have opportunities to share in the promotion of these values.
- Foster and develop children's spiritual awareness further by creating a quiet reflective area in the school grounds in order to cultivate a sense of identity and personal insight.

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

St Philip's Church of England Primary school is a welcoming, friendly and inclusive church school community. Christian values both implicit and explicit have a positive impact on the life of the school and underpin its spiritual, social and academic provision. The values are explored in depth through collective worship, as an integral part of the curriculum and are reinforced by the example set by adults in school. These values have a strong impact on pupils' academic achievement, personal development and well-being, ensuring that their progress is good. Pupils say that the Christian values reflect 'how the Bible tells us to live our lives and are special to Christians'. As a result, pupils learn in a safe and secure environment where they learn to reflect on their own attitudes and conduct. Behaviour amongst all groups is good and can be attributed to the way in which everyone understands the Christian values and wishes to live by them. Pupils are welcoming and supportive of each other and relationships throughout the school are excellent. The school gives good provision for vulnerable pupils with careful and accurate tracking of their progress. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They are proud of their school and enjoy talking about what they are learning and the many activities that are provided for them. Staff meetings have recently focused on how spiritual, moral and social development can permeate the whole curriculum and how staff can maximise opportunities to further this aspect of school life. Consequently pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, effectively supported by the strong Christian ethos, a rich and engaging curriculum, collective worship and Religious Education (RE). The outcomes are evident throughout the school with many opportunities for children to reflect and express their thoughts and feelings, through for example, art, poetry and music. 'Reflection chairs' have recently been introduced and effective use is made of these, for example in RE lessons. Older pupils had considered Jesus' words on the cross 'Father forgive them – they do not know what they are doing' and had opportunities to relate these words to how they should respond to others when they do wrong to them, by writing verses and prayers for the 'reflection chair'. The school has many indoor areas for quiet reflection and would benefit from a reflective outdoor area, set aside for quiet, peaceful thought. Pupils are helped to have an understanding that Christianity is a multi-cultural faith in many different ways, such as through a number of international visitors to the parish church. One example was Christians from the Czech republic, who came to help with the Holiday Club organised by the church. Pupils are active in other charitable activities which demonstrate that they want to help to make the world a better place. They show great awareness of the diversity of cultures in school and not only respect each other's beliefs and cultures but enjoy learning about them. The school has recently worked with the church to raise over £8,600 for a project to provide a well and sanitation for a village in Sierra Leone, under the verse from the Bible, 'I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink' Matthew 25:35.

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

St Philip's attributes great worth to collective worship with a pupil describing it as a time 'to all be together and to learn how we should worship God'. Collective worship is distinctively Christian and of central importance in the life of the school. Worship contributes strongly to pupils' spirituality and well-being by making explicit links between the Christian values and all aspects of school life. Pupils talk about the seasons of the church year and have a secure understanding of Christian festivals enhanced by services in the local church. These services are well supported by parents and members of the local community. Collective worship is rooted in biblical material, which currently follows the well planned theme, 'The Power of God's Love'. Therefore, pupils are able to talk about Bible stories with confidence, explain their significance and relate them to the school's Christian values. Times of prayer and reflection are integral to the school day and have a strong impact at a personal level. This is reflected in a child's comment that prayer is 'speaking to God as well as thinking about Him'.

There are many opportunities for pupils for write prayers, one of which is to write prayers for collective worship, which are later printed in the church's weekly order of service sheet. Pupils have many opportunities to be involved in collective worship in a number of ways and older children plan and lead and evaluate worship regularly, which was an area for development in the previous inspection. Pupils clearly enjoy active involvement in worship; for example, when they had the opportunity to wave palm branches and shout 'Hosanna!' as they listened attentively to the account of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem as part of the Easter story. They recognise its importance and explain that the elements of daily worship include prayer, quiet times of reflection and worshipping God through songs. Pupils experience a range of visitors and styles of worship. For example, the vicar and leaders from other local churches regularly lead worship and provide good opportunities for pupils to get to know local clergy. Following a worship theme about the Holy Trinity, pupils can explain God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and are developing a good understanding of this concept.

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

The headteacher's Christian vision and his commitment to this vision provide the driving force at the heart of the school's success as a church school. The high quality of leadership at all levels is a key factor in this success. Since the previous inspection, the staff, senior leaders and governors have been involved in reconsidering the school's vision statement. An INSET day, led by the school improvement advisor, was dedicated to working on the vision and values, with representatives from the church also involved. At St Philip's, a community has been developed where Christian values are not only expressed, but are lived out throughout the school. The headteacher, staff and governors are united in their desire to strive for continual improvement which benefits all members of the school community. Governors know their school well and as a result of rigorous self-evaluation and input from the Ethos Group, they have a good understanding of its strengths and areas that need further development. Discussion with parents on the day of the inspection showed that the school's Christian ethos is a prominent aspect of school life and is approached in a way that allows their children to explore the meaning of faith and belief openly. The school's links with the parish church are very strong. There is a very fruitful relationship with the church community based on mutual support and a sense of belonging together. Pupils say that the links with the church is one of the key ways that they express their church school status. Parents appreciate these links between the school and church and describe the school as 'a unique school with a strong community and family feeling'. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The enthusiastic RE subject leader, who is also the collective worship co-ordinator leads very effectively, ensuring that these areas are central to the life of the school and he provides excellent support for his colleagues. This is a very successful church school, one which has turned its Christian values into action and where everyone works together. The enthusiasm and commitment shown by the whole of the school staff team ensure that children have every opportunity to grow and develop into mature, knowledgeable and caring young people. The school strongly reflects the words of its vision statement, 'a school where staff and governors work in partnership with parents to provide a caring, stimulating environment rooted in Christian values'.

SIAMS report March 2016 St Philip's Church of England VC School, Bath BA2 2BN