



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **Batheaston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

School Lane  
Northend  
Batheaston  
Bath

BAI 7EP

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: Bath and Wells**

Local authority: Bath and North East Somerset

Dates of inspection: 13 October 2015

Date of last inspection: 15 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 109184

Headteacher: Sarah Weber

Inspector's name and number: Jane Tibbs 226

#### **School context**

Batheaston Church of England Primary School is an over-subscribed, average sized school with 214 pupils, situated in the village of Batheaston on the outskirts of Bath. The original Victorian building has been extended with a new hall and classrooms opened in 2012. The soil excavated during the building project has been utilised to make an outdoor facility providing outdoor classrooms, Forest school and areas for spiritual development and contemplation. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. The school is a National Support School

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Batheaston as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide outstanding leadership with a clear vision
- Articulate and confident pupils know that they are valued by God and their community as unique individuals and flourish in an atmosphere of trust, so that they value and respect others
- The school is an integral part of the community in which it sits, for the benefit of pupils and their families
- The provision of outstanding religious education allows pupils to learn about the Christian faith, to reflect upon what is of value to them and to explore their developing spirituality

### **Areas to improve**

- Develop the reflection areas in the communal areas of the school to include opportunities for reflection in all the classrooms
- Further develop the established links with the church community in order to give the whole school more of an understanding of the life and values of the church

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

The exceptional quality of the school's integration of an explicit Christian ethos driving a creative curriculum gives pupils frequent opportunities to explore their spirituality. This is a key aspect of the school's distinctiveness and encourages the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. An explicit set of Christian values is embedded at the heart of the school through the mnemonic RECIPE, representing respect, endeavour, contribute, include, protect and enjoy. This was chosen after consultation with all members of the school community, who can clearly articulate these key values that lie at the centre of the school's ethos and have an excellent understanding of how they make an impact on the pupils' learning and their personal development. The Christian rootedness of these six values, through explicit teaching of Bible stories in collective worship and religious education, means that pupils are able to relate a Christian understanding of these values to their own lives and learning. Pupils have the openness to express their spirituality in terms of faith or what it means to them personally with confidence and real enjoyment. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent and characterised by mutual respect between adults and pupils and the need to look after those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils commented that, "Really naughty people would not fit in to this school. It is a calm school with no bullies. Bullies would be found out really quickly and have to change. We're so friendly." The pairing of Year Six and Reception class pupils encourages responsibility and friendship. Relationships made are often forged for life; Parents spoke of older pupils who have left Batheaston school still maintaining contact with their children. Pupils also observed that their classes "become like a massive family. We have arguments but resolve them and laugh about them." Parents remarked that the values their children are taught are reflected in everyday life. One parent commented, "The school provides stability in a changing world". Efforts are made by the school to enable pupils to understand the multi-cultural diversity of modern Britain through the inclusion of input from friends of the school in the local community and the religious education curriculum.

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

Acts of worship are outstanding because they make an excellent contribution to the pupils' spiritual development and their understanding of the important contribution that prayer makes to the living out of a person's faith. Pupils recognise that collective worship is a special time in the school day and gives them a specific opportunity to be with God. An emphasis on quiet time and reflection gives pupils time to think about the Bible stories they hear and relate them to their own lives. Whether pupils have a personal faith or not, they agree that these times to think are important because they help them to "make sense of the world and the people in it." Pupils respond with an appropriate reverence to these quiet moments and to the opportunities for prayer. Pupils have an exceptionally clear understanding of the power of prayer and how it can make a difference. One pupil observed that acts of worship were, "a time to forget about what's happened and talk to God". Another commented that prayer was an opportunity to, "just talk to God and say sorry, asking for forgiveness because you can't take back the things you have said". Explicit Christian messages are used to explore values, and links are made to the life of the school that help to make these values relevant to the pupils. Pupils from a young age are developing a real enthusiasm for discussing the nature of the Trinity, and therefore growing in understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Planning for worship is thorough. It is based on the school's Christian values and, together with the events in the church calendar, complements the promotion of the school's Christian ethos. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the regular opportunities they have to participate and

engage in acts of worship. They are involved in the planning and leadership of worship and have their views taken into account to improve the quality of the impact of worship. Year six pupils plan and present worship for pupils in the Reception class. Festivals are celebrated in the church and the presence of 'Liturgical Ted' (a teddy bear dressed in the appropriate colour) helps pupils to understand the changing colours of the church year. The recent addition of the inclusion of the popular 'Open the Book' stories in collective worship, led by members of the church congregation, has enhanced the variety of worship experienced by pupils. In addition, regular use is also made of the outdoor area for acts of worship. Monitoring by school leaders leads to identifying areas for development and these in turn become integral to overall school improvement planning.

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

This is a fully inclusive school where pupils flourish and achieve well. Christian love and compassion are at the heart of all the school does. Pupils are empowered to believe in themselves; they are encouraged, valued and nurtured as children of God. Relationships are excellent because adults and children treat others as they would wish to be treated, consequently behaviour is outstanding. The passion and commitment of the headteacher and senior leadership team has ensured that the school has made excellent progress since the last inspection in developing a Christian ethos that has meaning and purpose for all members of the school community. Leaders and managers articulate this ethos with a simple clarity that allows them to accurately identify the actions needed to continue to improve. The headteacher is passionate about exploring the distinct ethos so that it adds depth to the pupils' educational experience, both academically and personally. She has a very good understanding of the links between the school's core values and work in the classroom and is keen to explore, with the school community, a wider interpretation of how spirituality can further enhance the quality of education. She is very ably supported by the co-ordinator for religious education, who is also passionate about the place of collective worship and ensures that both have a high profile within the whole curriculum and life of the school. Religious education is outstanding because of the consistent, very high quality of teaching and learning which places high expectations on the outcomes for pupils. Teaching seen during the inspection in both Key stages carefully guided pupils through the investigation of challenging concepts that deepened understanding by skilfully encouraging pupils to explore their own thoughts about faith and belief. Governors fully support the school's Christian character and have a good understanding of the core values and the impact they have on the pupils' learning and personal development. The vicar is a familiar visitor to the school and links with the church are improving with the introduction of Open the Book and the use of the church for some RE lessons. The links fostered by the headteacher with local schools, the local community and the Diocese have enabled the sharing of good practice to enhance learning for all in the school community. The school has become a bridge between the two areas of the village and is regarded by many as the centre of the local community. Parents appreciate the school's encouragement of their children to ask questions about matters of faith and belief. They are particularly pleased that their children do this with confidence and from an informed position in which they do not make judgements, but are accepting of people of all faiths and those who have none. Arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report October 2015 Batheaston C of E VC Primary School, Batheaston. BA1 6ND