



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Flax Bourton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Station Road
Flax Bourton
BS48 1UA

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: North Somerset

Dates of inspection: 15 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 10 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 109194

Co-Headteachers: Jane Bennett and Lorraine Woollven

Inspector's name and number: Jane Tibbs 226

School context

Flax Bourton is a smaller than average primary school with 95 pupils arranged in four classes. It is situated in sensitively landscaped grounds in the village of Flax Bourton, to the west of Bristol. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is above the national average. A new classroom is currently being built on the site to accommodate the extra pupils due to be admitted in September 2015.

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

- Christian values underpin, and have an evident impact on, the school's approach to relationships, the wellbeing of pupils and attitudes towards learning
- Collective worship provides important times for pupils to be still and reflect and sets the tone for the school day
- The school offers an environment where children are valued as individuals and as a result, their talents are given every opportunity to flourish

Areas to improve

- Support the embedding of reflection areas within classrooms through greater involvement of pupils, so that they are enabled to explore in depth their understanding of spirituality
- Ensure the Christian ethos of the school is maintained and developed during the redevelopment of the building and increased intake of new pupils

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

The strength of Flax Bourton is the range of outstanding educational experiences provided for all pupils. The school's vision is to aim high, respect others and have fun, and from this simple message emanates all school policies and practices which are underpinned by core values that have explicit Christian roots. This is something that is understood by all members of the school community. The values are explored in depth through collective worship, are an integral part of the curriculum and are reinforced by the example set by adults in the school. Consequently, pupils learn in a safe and secure environment where they are taught to reflect on their own attitudes and conduct. The warm, caring ethos is evident in the excellent relationships enjoyed at all levels throughout the school community. Behaviour amongst all groups is excellent and can be attributed to the way in which everyone understands the Christian values and wishes to live by them. Children are proud of the school and talk enthusiastically about what they are learning and the many activities provided for them through the lively, creative curriculum. The school's strong Christian ethos, collective worship and Religious Education (RE) are effective in supporting pupil's spiritual, moral and social development. Colourful displays and Christian signs and symbols emphasize the school's distinctiveness and support the pupil's growing spiritual awareness. The school has developed a shared understanding of spirituality and how it can be put into practice through curriculum planning, reflective areas in each classroom and around the school. Parents appreciate the way that their children support each other and collaborate very effectively in their learning, demonstrating a Christian responsibility for the whole school family. Pupils listen respectfully to one another and share their views and opinions as they know that what they have to say will be valued. The importance of responsibility, tenacity and perseverance is developed through participation in the Egg Heads project which seeks to give pupils the opportunity to learn basic business skills through the care and maintenance of their hens, and the Pets as Therapy scheme which enables pupils to be part of the dog training project. The presence of animals in school also helps with the understanding of the life-cycle. Pupils have many opportunities both within RE, the wider curriculum and in their charitable work to develop their understanding of the diversity of cultures and faiths in modern Britain and around the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Acts of worship are vibrant and exciting times in the school day and are central to the overall life of the school. Worship contributes to the children's spirituality and well-being by making explicit links between core values and all aspects of school life. This is something that all pupils appreciate and which even the youngest children can understand. For example, Year 1 pupils can explain how the prayers they say in collective worship help them to understand the importance of forgiveness, and that it is the right thing to do no matter how difficult it is to sometimes achieve. It is this level of understanding, that values are not always easy to live out, which makes the impact of collective worship outstanding. The messages pupils hear in worship are recognisable in their own lives and experiences. This development of explicit links between core values and worship themes, together with their links to Bible stories has been significant in ensuring pupils' understanding of their Christian roots. Pupils respond enthusiastically in acts of worship and have plenty of opportunity to engage through discussion and with prayer. Prayer is important in the life of the school. For example, pupils pray spontaneously and confidently, including those in the Reception class. Class prayer books are obviously well used and added to frequently. The church community has recently presented the school with an impressive Lord's Prayer banner which has already been incorporated into worship and the teaching of RE. They talk about prayer in terms of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and demonstrate a deep understanding of the mystery of the Trinity. The Trinity candle is a constant, visible presence in the school hall enabling the concept of the Trinity to become an integral part of school life. There is an emphasis on simple and appropriate liturgy in worship, which pupils respond to with confidence. Pupils are fully involved in the planning,

delivery and assessment of worship and there are good opportunities for them to reflect and pray at various times through the school day. Collective worship makes an important contribution to the pupils' understanding of the church year and the celebration of Christian festivals. There is a close link to the parish church and the Associate Priest is a regular visitor to the school. Evaluation of worship contributes to school development planning and so enhances the worship experience for all.

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

The co-headteachers and governors confidently articulate and encourage a vision for the school which is firmly based on distinctively Christian values. The passion and commitment of the senior leadership team has ensured that the school has made excellent progress as a church school since the previous inspection. Areas for development from the last report have been effectively addressed and further initiatives have been embedded for the benefit of the children and the whole school community. Through regular visits to the school, governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas that need further development. At Flax Bourton, a community has been created where Christian values are not only expressed, but are lived out at the heart of the school. The quality of leadership by the co-headteachers, well supported by the staff and governors, contributes significantly to the success of this Church of England school. Actions taken are sharply focussed on exactly what needs to improve. The same is true of any training undertaken and the benefits of diocesan courses are clearly visible. There is a strong sense of shared purpose which ensures that a commonly held belief in the school's Christian ethos is being constantly promoted. Parents too, share this understanding and explain what the school's ethos means to them, as does the whole school staff. Parents have a strong relationship with the school. They recognise how its Christian character develops spiritual and moral qualities in their children and how these impact on learning. One parent commented, "My daughter has put in a lot of hard work at school, but it is undoubtedly the leadership and teaching skills of all at Flax Bourton that have brought out the best in her". The opinions of pupils are respectfully heard through Pupil Voice and the School Council. The RE co-ordinator leads the subject very effectively ensuring that it plays an important role in the life of the school. RE is very well taught and expectations of pupils' performance are high. Pupils are challenged through the posing of questions which stretch their minds. As a result, they make excellent progress. Links with the church and community are strong. Church members are actively involved with school and the school is an enthusiastic presence at church events. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

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