

**Coombe Bissett Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Shutts Lane  
Coombe Bissett  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP5 4LU

**Diocese: Salisbury**

Local Authority: Wiltshire  
Date of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011  
Date of last inspection: July 2008  
School's Unique Reference Number: 126382  
Headteacher: Mrs Debbie Cockrean  
Inspector's name and NS number: Mr Chris Williamson 290

**School context**

Coombe Bissett Church of England Primary School has 92 children on roll. It serves the villages and hamlets in the surrounding area, including the outskirts of Salisbury. There are 15% of the children on the Special Needs Register, which is below average. 5% of the children are from ethnic minority groups and 3% are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. There have been a significant number of changes to staffing since the last inspection, including a new headteacher who joined the school 2 years ago. A significant number of new governors have been appointed in the last year. The school has achieved several national awards including the Silver Artsmark.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Coombe Bissett Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

The distinctiveness of Coombe Bissett Primary School is demonstrated by the importance placed on Christian values, such as care and mutual respect, which permeate the school. The effective leadership together with the support of all the adults involved with the school mean that the school is well placed to continue to develop.

**Established strengths**

- The Christian values which permeate the school
- The level of care and respect shown for every individual
- The spiritual development of the children
- The quality of relationships and the effective teamwork within the school community

**Focus for development**

- To increase the involvement of children in planning and leading collective worship
- To develop assessment in religious education to enable children to know the next steps in their learning and to involve children in this process
- To extend children's awareness and understanding of other faiths and cultures both within the UK and globally

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

Christian values permeate the life of the school and have a significant impact on the daily life of the school. The school's vision, promise and aims are all based on Christian values and children and adults recognise their importance as well as how they impact on the daily life of the school. A significant level of mutual care and respect is demonstrated and the school works hard to meet the needs of every individual child. As a result the children benefit from good pastoral care. Children appreciate listening to stories from the Bible and are able to apply Christian teachings to their lives. Children's behaviour is excellent. Prayer is an

important feature during the school day and is used regularly with the children. Children participate confidently and appropriately in a variety of prayers, demonstrating a deep level of reflection and thought; this plays an important role in contributing to children's spiritual development. Visits to the local parish church and to Salisbury cathedral have enabled children to appreciate the importance of the church in people's lives and to develop effectively their understanding of spirituality and of the local Christian community. Children enjoy being given a wide range of responsibilities around the school and a variety of groups have been established, such as the school council, which contribute effectively to the life of the school. Children have led and participated enthusiastically in a variety of fund raising for charities which has enabled them to develop their own understanding of the needs of different communities. However the school has rightly identified the need to extend the children's experiences of a wider range of cultures and faiths both nationally and globally. The quality of relationships throughout the school is particularly good and is based on the Christian values of the school, for example the buddy system works effectively. The commitment to the overall vision of the school is excellent and the quality of teamwork helps children's development. Children's spiritual development is a strength of the school. Children are encouraged to develop their understanding and appreciation of the natural world. A reflective and interactive display, created with great enthusiasm by the collective worship group together with the headteacher, enhances children's spiritual development. The school plans to seek further opportunities to extend children's spiritual development by improving the school grounds to provide quiet areas where the children can reflect.

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

Children have a positive attitude to collective worship and enjoy participating in acts of worship in school. In the collective worship observed, children participated enthusiastically. There was a clear focus which built on previous acts of worship, the worship was made relevant to the children's lives and contributed to their spiritual development; an appropriate atmosphere was maintained throughout. Children are beginning to be involved in the organisation of collective worship and a collective worship group was formed earlier this year. Group members are enthusiastic about their role in improving collective worship and are beginning to make a significant impact. For example they are very pleased that they are becoming increasingly involved in the participation of acts of worship and that hymns are now selected from their "top 10". The school has rightly acknowledged the need to develop further the involvement of children in planning and leading collective worship. Opportunities for learning and reflection are provided in collective worship and children are able to make links with previous collective worship experiences. Collective worship makes a significant impact on the day to day actions of the children. Many children particularly value the range of visitors, from a variety of different denominations, who lead collective worship. This variety of worship leaders makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual growth. Events from the church calendar are incorporated into the planning of themes for collective worship. Children participate regularly in the services which are held in the church. Children are familiar with a range of examples Anglican traditions and practice. Children in Years 5 and 6 have enjoyed learning to use hand bells and used them effectively to contribute to the Christingle service. Collective worship is an important aspect of school life. A system of evaluation by staff contributes to future planning. The school has identified the need to increase the involvement of children in the evaluation process when improvements in collective worship have become embedded.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Standards in religious education (RE) are good and children are making good progress in RE. Lessons are well planned and provide effective learning for different learning styles. In the lessons observed there were clear learning objectives. In the Foundation Stage and Year 1 lesson children were particularly motivated by the interesting activity and through the effective use of speaking and listening strategies. In the Key Stage 2 lesson there was a need to extend the more able children. Each unit of work is assessed by teachers, using a new system for recording. The older children participate in this assessment. However the school acknowledges the need for teachers and children to work together to identify the next steps in children's learning. Children value the opportunities provided to reflect on their work.

They are confident in sharing their ideas with each other and also demonstrate respect for each others contributions. Children appreciate the encouragement they are given to relate their learning to their own experiences and beliefs. Children are developing a growing spiritual and moral awareness through being encouraged to explore their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. Children's spiritual and moral understanding is enhanced further by the school's effective partnership with the church. The Christian character of the school makes an important contribution to children's understanding of Christian faith and practice. Children are able to make many links between RE and collective worship. Whole school activities such as the activity on "Tobias and the Angel" provide children with good opportunities to make links across the curriculum and also promote the distinctive Christian character of the school. Children enjoy taking part in "encounter days", for example children were able to develop a good understanding of Hinduism. Opportunities for children to value religious and cultural diversity are limited and the school has correctly identified the need to develop children's understanding of other faiths and cultures both nationally and globally. The school has also rightly identified the need to extend children's experiences of Christianity as a multi cultural faith. The recently appointed RE leader has consulted with the local vicar whilst rewriting the policy for RE. The RE leader has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in RE, demonstrating the school's good capacity for improving the quality of children's learning in RE.

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

All stakeholders have a clear understanding of how distinctive Christian values are central to school life. The school vision was renewed in Spring 2010 and emphasises the school as a caring Christian community. All members of the school community have been involved in establishing the vision and have a clear understanding about what it means for the school, for example children have contributed their own illustrations to a display about the vision. A strong emphasis is placed on encouraging children to be responsible for aspects of school life, for example this year the collective worship group is already beginning to make a positive impact on collective worship in the school. The school, as a church school, is monitored and discussed informally by staff and governors and this contributes to school development planning. Children are increasingly becoming involved in the strategic review of the school, for example the school council are focussing on different aspects of the school. Succession planning has been taken seriously by the school with staff and governors benefitting from personal and professional development. The development of both staff and governors has coincided with the significant number of staff changes and new governors. The school works closely with the local cluster of schools to provide professional development opportunities for staff. The school has a clear understanding of its future development needs as a church school community. The full governing body meetings begin with a prayer and reflection which helps to ensure that the Christian ethos of the school is central to all discussions and business. Excellent relationships exist between the school and the local church and children are involved in a variety of ways such as distributing produce from the Harvest supper and contributing flowers for the church. The school wishes to continue to develop the involvement of the children in the life of the church. A variety of successful links exist with the community such as children visiting older people locally. The school has identified the need to develop links with churches beyond the diocese. Children's awareness of other cultures is beginning to be enhanced through a link made recently with a school in Finland but this is at an early stage of development. The school rightly recognises the need to extend children's awareness of other faiths and cultures within the UK and globally. Parents are particularly supportive of the school.