



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Coombe Bissett Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Shutts Lane
Coombe Bissett
Salisbury
SP5 4LU

Previous inspection grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Date of inspection: 21 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 28 January 2011

School's unique reference number: 126382

Headteacher: Deborah Cockrean

Inspector's name and number: Marcia Headon 761

School context

Coombe Bissett Primary School is a small village school with 100 pupils aged from four to eleven. It serves the local area and the town of Salisbury. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage and very few speak English as a second language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding known as the pupil premium is below the national average. Since the last inspection extensive building works have taken place to provide more classroom space.

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

- The headteacher, through her highly principled and enthusiastic leadership and care, demonstrates the school's values very strongly.
- The strong support given by the vicar and foundation governors enhances links with the community and develops the church school distinctiveness.
- Collective worship, which is integral to the life of the school, helps to deepen pupils' spirituality.

Areas to improve

- Develop assessment in religious education (RE) at Key Stage One so that pupils are very clear of the next steps in their learning.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to become more involved in the planning of collective worship, in order to enhance their understanding of the nature of worship.
- Ensure that pupils know the links between the values of the school and Bible stories in order to further their understanding of the Christian faith.

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

The school's core Christian values of care, commitment and creativity influence its work strongly and as one pupil said 'the values guide how we live our lives'. Pupils can explain why they are important although currently they do not always make the link to the biblical roots which support the values. They are clearer on how the values of care and commitment influence their lives than creativity. Pupils demonstrate the values by being very caring towards one another, showing a commitment to their school through joining in activities and showing pride in their work, and by seeking to be creative in their thinking and work. Members of staff also live out these values, supporting pupils in their learning especially when pupils find it difficult, looking after their pastoral well-being effectively and presenting work in an often innovative way. As a result of the consistent focus on the school's values, pupils achieve well and the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing. This lives out the school's philosophy that each child is loved by God as an individual and must be helped as part of a Christian community. Respect is evident between all and the staff speak warmly of the care shown to them as well as to the pupils by the headteacher. The school is inclusive as can be seen by pupils' use of sign language in collective worship to help a child who uses it to communicate. Attendance is good overall as pupils are eager to come to school knowing that they are cared for and valued. The school has a clear definition of spirituality and pupils' spiritual growth is developing well as a result of the opportunities they are given to reflect in the curriculum and especially in collective worship. Pupils behave very well. This is because the school's Christian values of care and commitment are threaded through the behaviour and other policies. Pupils show tolerance to those of all faiths and none. Through charity work they support those less fortunate than themselves, for example they have sent football kits to children in the Sudan, and this is regarded as an expression of the school's values in action. However, pupils are less aware of the role of the Anglican church within Britain and worldwide.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Acts of worship are totally central to the life of the school to which they make a very significant spiritual contribution. Worship is made relevant so that pupils understand the messages and act upon them. Collective worship makes an important contribution to pupils' understanding of the events of the Christian Year and their significance, for example Palm Sunday. As a result of the Bible story and the palm crosses which they were given in worship, pupils link this to the events of Holy Week very easily. Pupils also see worship as a time to celebrate, to praise God together and to reflect quietly. The prayers which they use, some of which they have written, are an opportunity to do this. Pupils clearly enjoy worship and join very enthusiastically in singing songs, taking part in answering questions or acting out the stories. Pupils lead aspects of worship especially in the local church. However, currently they are not sufficiently involved in its planning. A quiet reflective atmosphere is created for worship. All know that lighting the candle signifies a special time and even the youngest pupils can explain that it signifies Jesus as the light of the world. Worship is carefully planned and is led by headteacher, the deputy headteacher and teachers, the Vicar or other local clergy, thus allowing pupils to experience different traditions in worship. Pupils' understanding of simple Anglican responses is being developed well by the use of a Christian greeting written by the very active pupil collective worship group. Pupils have a very good understanding of the purpose of prayer and how important it is to thank God, as well as to ask for help. They know that prayers can be said at anytime and anywhere and that sometimes they may not be answered. The collective worship group has recently written a new school prayer based on the school values and is currently writing a new grace to be said at lunchtimes. Both older and younger pupils also show a strongly developing understanding of the meaning of the Trinity. Collective worship is monitored by the governors and its impact evaluated by pupils, staff and governors. This evaluation is used to help planning. For example, recently a focus was placed on explaining the meaning of the Lord's Prayer, which evaluation showed had not been fully understood by the pupils. Staff feel very affirmed by

collective worship, regarding it as a time of praise and quiet reflection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) enjoys an important status in the school and pupils enjoy these lessons. Standards in RE are in line with national expectations at all key stages and are in line with other core subjects. The pupils have a very good understanding of Christianity and are developing their knowledge of other major world religions. They particularly like finding out about other religions and are beginning to compare and contrast them with Christianity. The teaching of skills is a well developed aspect of RE and in a challenging lesson, Years Five and Six pupils were considering how they could interpret, assess and evaluate their own learning about how religious beliefs were expressed through the arts in different religions. However, pupils make faster progress in learning about beliefs and practices than in learning from beliefs. The overall quality of teaching and learning over time is good. Teachers demonstrate high levels of subject knowledge, and their questioning skills require pupils to explore ideas and to think. Pupils enjoy the variety of activities in RE such as drawing mind maps, drama and art work, all of which develop their ideas and creativity as well as making a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Links are frequently made with the school's core values. Marking is thorough and helps pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Pupils respond well to this using their 'purple pens'. The assessment of RE is stronger in Key Stage Two than in Key Stage One. The headteacher's leadership of RE is good. She works closely with the deputy and with other schools in order to moderate standards. She keeps herself up to date by attending national conferences and courses run by the diocese. RE is well resourced.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision of the school as a strong Christian community which she models in her practice. She provides excellent leadership, knows her school well and is rigorous in school self-evaluation. The mission statement is prominently displayed in the school and on the website, and all within the school support this strongly. It has an impact as it fulfils its intention as children are curious and the ethos in the school is one of a strong Christian community. The values were reviewed after the previous inspection to ensure they supported the ethos of the school. The curriculum planning, with its emphasis upon inspiring a love of learning, shows how well the values are now embedded. Parents are highly appreciative of the school's emphasis upon its mission and values which they say 'are intrinsic to all the school does'. The governors are highly supportive of the school and work closely with the headteacher, holding her to account well for the church school distinctiveness. The governors' ethos committee monitors and evaluates this aspect of the school very thoroughly, although other committees also provide useful information to support this evaluation. It has led to improvements in the school. The governors' action plan for church school distinctiveness is comprehensive and entirely appropriate. Foundation governors demonstrate their commitment by ensuring they regularly attend courses at the diocese to keep up to date. The school takes its responsibility for developing church school leaders seriously and professional development is a high priority. Exceptionally strong partnerships exist with the local church and the community. The vicar is a great support to the school both in terms of helping to steer the collective worship group and providing advice in RE. She is very well known by the pupils and the staff welcome her pastoral guidance. The church is used by the school for services such as the Easter Experience and the school helps the church through, for example, preparing posies for Mothering Sunday. The school is developing links with a school in France with whom it is currently comparing Easter preparations. Links with the diocese are also good. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.