CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

The Methodist Church

# National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

**Stalbridge Church of England Foundation Primary School**

Stalbridge

Dorset

DT10 2LF

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| Diocese: | Salisbury |
| Local authority: | Dorset |
| Date of inspection: | 20 November 2014 |
| Date of last inspection: | 09 February 2010 |
| School's unique reference number: | 113899 |
| Headteacher: | Mr Michael Allen |
| Inspector's name and number: | Mr Chris Williamson 290 |

## School context

Stalbridge Church of England Primary School has 194 children on roll. Children attend from Stalbridge and the surrounding area. 15% of the children have Special Educational Needs which is below average and 5% are entitled to Free School Meals. The majority of children are of white British heritage. Since the last inspection there has been a very significant change in the membership of the governing body including five different chairs of governors with the most recent being appointed in September 2014. Three new teachers, including the deputy headteacher, have also been appointed since the last inspection.

## The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stalbridge Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Implicit Christian values are effective in underpinning the life of the school, enabling all children to make good progress
- Children apply Christian values to their daily lives and as a result there are very positive relationships based on mutual care and respect
- The effective leadership of the headteacher, throughout many changes in the governing body, which has ensured the continued development of the school as a church school
- There is a strong partnership between the school and the local church

## Areas to improve

- To embed opportunities for children's spiritual development as the new primary curriculum and the curriculum for Religious Education (RE) develop
- To provide opportunities for the children to plan and lead collective worship
- To formally evaluate collective worship to ensure continual improvement
- To ensure effective governance of a church school by including church school self evaluation in the cycle of school development planning

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

An implicit Christian ethos, which is understood by all stakeholders, is consistently promoted throughout the school. Christian values underpin children's personal development and this makes a significant contribution to their academic achievement which is good overall. Pastoral care is excellent and the school's Christian ethos ensures that children feel valued as individuals; this has a significant impact on children's behaviour and their relationships. Children demonstrate care, mutual respect, courtesy, consideration and tolerance for each other and relationships between all members of the school community are particularly good. Targeted additional support is provided for children who need extra help to develop good social skills. This enables these children to develop greater self confidence and boosts their academic achievement. Children are encouraged to show care for others by supporting younger members of the school. For example Year 6 children help in 'Wake 'n' Shake' and also help Reception children to feel welcome during their first year at school. Children's spiritual development is good however the school rightly recognises the need to continue to develop opportunities which promote children's spiritual development. For example a 'thought for the week', which is explicitly linked to a verse from the Bible, is developed in collective worship and referred to at appropriate points during the week. Children speak positively about the opportunities for prayer and reflection that exist during the day and are able to express their preferences. Children without a particular Christian faith are happy to respect times of prayer since they understand that others wish to pray. Children have a well developed sense of right and wrong and are given opportunities to discuss the consequences of their actions for themselves and for others. Since the last inspection opportunities for children to broaden their understanding of other cultures and religions other than Christianity have improved. For example a new scheme of work for RE, which uses an enquiry based approach, was introduced last year and this has enhanced children's cultural awareness. Children say they like learning about other cultures and religions in RE. Similarly children also enjoy the new scheme of work for Personal, Social and Health Education which also contributes to this understanding. The new RE scheme of work enables children to learn more from religion and belief and it has encouraged staff to be more creative in their teaching. The new RE curriculum also deepens children's understanding of Christianity and therefore makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Children regard collective worship as an important part of the school day and they are respectful, reverent and highly engaged. Collective worship is underpinned by Christian values and children are able to relate the worship themes to their daily lives, for example to provide moral direction. Children's understanding of Christianity is deepened by collective worship. They particularly enjoy the occasions when they have an active role, such as writing and reading prayers or poems, singing, acting or playing music. Older children say they like key stage worship because they 'feel more grown up'. Children value the opportunities for prayer and reflection which are always provided in collective worship. Children are encouraged to say their own individual prayers aloud with confidence in collective worship. These opportunities for prayer enable children of any faith or none to be able to respond to worship and to develop their spirituality through prayer and reflection. Collective worship is carefully planned by the headteacher in conjunction with members of the local church. The school's partnership with the church is excellent and is actively supported by foundation governors. Collective worship incorporates Anglican festivals which are celebrated both in school and in the local church. Children particularly value worshipping in church once a fortnight and this deepens their understanding of the Anglican faith. In the collective worship observed, which took place in church, children were very engaged and sang enthusiastically. Collective worship in school is

enhanced further by the regular visits of the local Rector to lead worship as well as by occasional visits by worship leaders from other denominations. Children value these visiting worship leaders who broaden and deepen their understanding of Christianity. Children's understanding of the features of prayer and reflection is enhanced by their experience of planning and leading a class assembly once each year in which they celebrate their learning. However the school rightly recognises the need to provide more opportunities for children to plan and lead collective worship. Some informal evaluation of collective worship takes place which has led to children having more opportunities to participate in collective worship. The school has not yet fully developed formal systems of evaluation of collective worship by children and governors. This was an issue raised at the last inspection.

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

School leaders promote a vision for the school which is based on distinctively Christian values. All stakeholders were involved when this vision was created. The school vision, which has been shared with staff who have joined the school this year, has a significant impact on pastoral care, children's sense of well being and consequently on their academic achievement. Staff and governors contribute effectively to the School Development Plan which leads to improvements. There have been many changes to the membership of the governing body since the last inspection and as a result the governing body is yet to develop fully effective procedures specifically for governance of a church school, including a church school self evaluation process. The school has, however, ensured that there is effective professional development of staff as leaders in church schools which has ensured the continued effectiveness of the school as a church school. For example the development of RE is regarded as a priority in the school and the RE leader has been supported by the headteacher in her role to promote improvement in RE by the introduction of a new scheme of work. The school enjoys an excellent partnership with the local church. Children value the frequent visits from the clergy of the local church to participate in many school activities including collective worship and children enjoy visiting the church regularly for services and for learning in RE. The school has productive links with the local community. For example the school's participation in the village Remembrance Service is greatly appreciated by the community and the school choir regularly sing at village events. Children participate in charity events, for example by welcoming the local community to their Macmillan Big Coffee Morning. The School Council plays an active role in deciding which local and national charities to support. These projects help to develop children's understanding of other communities.

SIAMS report November 2014 Stalbridge Church of England Foundation Primary School, Stalbridge, Dorset DT10 2LF