

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Berry Pomeroy Parochial Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Berry Pomeroy  
Totnes  
Devon  
TQ9 6LH

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Exeter</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Devon
Date of inspection	21 September 2017
Date of last inspection	24 September 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 113388
Headteacher	Susan Bower
Inspector's name and number	Patricia Morris 626

#### School context

Berry Pomeroy is a smaller than average sized primary school with 90 children on roll. The school serves the village and surrounding area as well as a significant number of children attending from outside the catchment area. The majority of children are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average while the number supported by Pupil Premium is below. Mobility is higher than the national average. Attendance is slightly below the national average. The school defederated from a federation of six village primary schools in March 2015. There have been significant changes in staffing over the last two years.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Berry Pomeroy as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values are embedded in the life of the school and underpin children's positive attitudes to learning, very good manners and high standards of behaviour.
- The continual dedication and commitment of the headteacher during the significant changes over last two years to endorse the Christian ethos and ensure the best for all children in her care.
- The proactive governing body, effectively led by the very capable, knowledgeable chair of governors and extremely supportive long-standing foundation governor, are committed to moving the school forward as a church school.
- Very good relationships and a strong commitment throughout the school community generate a shared team vision in promoting the distinctive Christian character of the school.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop a shared understanding between all members of the school community of what spirituality means so that more clearly defined opportunities to engage in spiritual experiences are identified.
- Develop a more rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship that gathers high quality evidence to identify priorities to improve worship and extend opportunities for children to lead and plan worship.
- Develop the role of the new staff team in promoting Christian distinctiveness so that they have of greater involvement in evaluating its impact on school life.

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

The vision of the school is clearly underpinned by five core Christian values of trust, respect, responsibility, forgiveness and friendship. All members of the school community were involved in deciding the values, which is reflected in the way they underpin every aspect of school life. Values make a distinctive contribution to children's positive attitudes to learning, their very good manners and high standard of behaviour. Children confidently articulate these values and their impact on daily lives and speak proudly about the weekly award for seeing values in action, which they refer to as 'valued moments'. They talk enthusiastically about the many photographs on display showing examples of how values are a natural part of their everyday achievements. Displays are bright, colourful and meaningful to children. For example, a wall of bricks based on Christian values represents their school 'built on solid foundations'. Children's paintings, reflecting the lovely views that surround the school, show their genuine appreciation of God's creation as they explain, 'God is special and made this beautiful world for us'.

Relationships are a strength of the school and the strong, conscientious team, who have been in place since March 2017, are already making a positive impact in promoting the Christian character of the school and securing the Christian ethos. Children reinforce the importance of relationships when describing a bowl of pebbles on display as 'each pebble represents everyone in our school. The bowl holds us together as a school family' and 'all the gems are special but they are different, just like us'. The very caring, welcoming atmosphere is apparent in the way older children look after younger children through a 'buddy system' used for walking to the local church and on the playground. Outside areas are used creatively for experiences to support children's spiritual development. For example, multi-coloured benches are well used for quiet, reflective times and children talk enthusiastically about the school garden where every child has the opportunity to grow vegetables and flowers which are then sold to raise money for more seeds. There is some awareness of spirituality, but as yet no common understanding, which means that opportunities to explore spiritual experiences are limited because they are not always clearly identified within the curriculum. Religious education (RE) makes a positive contribution to the Christian character and values of the school, ensuring there is some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith with children showing respect for diversity and difference within other faith communities.

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

Collective worship is very important in the life of the school and is highly valued by all members of the school community. Worship is central in promoting Christian values with planning based around the teachings of Jesus and links with children's lives today. Children are totally engaged in worship and say it is a time of 'coming together' and is 'filled with joy'. The very good partnership between school and church promotes the mutual understanding of the school's Christian vision. A variety of leaders contribute to making worship stimulating and fun for children. They particularly enjoy worship led by the 'Open the Book' team, which encourages them to be involved in role-play. Children lead various aspects of worship especially celebration services of Christian festivals which are held in the church. These are reinforced by 'Pause Days' where each class takes a different aspect of a festival then come together as a whole school to share what they have learnt. These experiences provide children with a good knowledge of Christian celebrations within the church year. As collective worship takes place in the small village hall next door to the school, there is limited space but services in the church are very well supported. Children have a confident understanding of prayer as a way to talk with God. Prayers and blessings are said at various times throughout the school day and a school prayer has been written to embrace core Christian values. Opportunities for children to write and share their own prayers are encouraged through prayers trees that often form part of worship areas in each classroom. Worship makes a positive contribution to children's spiritual development through opportunities for guided reflection that enable children to explore their relationship with God and the world around them. Children talk confidently about their feelings and know they are loved and supported by God. For example, children were eager to contribute when invited to come out in worship to share their feelings about new experiences, which linked to a Bible story they had heard. Personal reflection books are an effective way through which children record their thoughts on 'bigger' questions such as 'What does forgiveness mean to me?' Children have a developing awareness of the Trinity and are given opportunities to explore what this means such as creating stained glass windows to represent God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Informal monitoring of worship takes place through talking to children and foundation governor reports. A more formal approach to evaluation of the impact of worship, that identifies further improvements, has yet to be fully established.

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

The school has experienced a turbulent two years with a large number of staff and other changes. Following a significant consultation and period of reflection, the decision was made to withdraw from a federation with other village schools. During this time the headteacher's commitment to maintaining the church school distinctiveness and ethos ensured that the well-being and progress of children were a priority throughout the many changes. A new

governing body was established and committed themselves to a rigorous training programme to ensure they maintained challenge as well as support. Governors are well informed and totally engaged in school life. They are extremely well led by a knowledgeable chair of governors who has initiated an impressive and thorough programme for monitoring to ensure all decisions and aspects of school life are evaluated and challenged within a Christian ethos. The impact of this has yet to be seen as the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school is still becoming embedded. An experienced foundation governor is particularly valued for her guidance and commitment to the school. Such strategies ensure there is a good understanding of the school's church school distinctiveness and that leaders articulate and promote a shared vision based on explicit Christian values. Until recently, RE has been effectively led by a very able HLTA whose good subject knowledge provided children with opportunities for learning through a range of creative experiences including drama, music and art. The newly appointed leader has a very clear focus and vision for RE, to build on these experiences, including thorough planning and a monitoring and evaluation programme to involve all stakeholders. Lessons allow children to gain some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and explore the diversity of other cultures and faiths. Standards in RE are in line with other core subjects and both RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The partnership with the church is strong and contributes positively to school life with many families attending the 'messy church' sessions, outside school. Links with the local community include singing at various events and locations such as the local Mare and Foal Sanctuary. Fund raising enables children to gain an awareness of those who are not as fortunate as them by supporting charities such as the local food bank as well as national and global charities. For example, the school community sponsors the education of two children in Africa enabling children to know why and how they are making a difference. Attendance has been an issue in the past but a more thorough approach to addressing absence is having a positive effect. Parents are well informed through newsletters, open mornings and annual questionnaires. They particularly appreciate the recent initiative of regular 'open surgeries' and feel they are listened to and can give their opinions. Parents feel that the good experiences offered to their children contribute to them being 'well grounded' and the school 'encourages children to develop qualities that will support them through their future lives'.

SIAMS report September 2017 Berry Pomeroy Parochial Church of England Primary School Totnes Devon TQ9 6LH