



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St Katharine's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Savernake Forest, Burbage, Wiltshire  
SN8 3BG

**Previous SIAS grade: Satisfactory**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Salisbury**

Local authority: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: 1 December 2015

Date of last inspection: November 2010

School's unique reference number: 126310

Headteacher: Niki Jones

Inspector's name and number: Lesley Turville 732

#### School context

St. Katharine's Church of England School is a small rural primary school. Its roll has been steadily rising since the last inspection and currently stands at 91 pupils. It provides a focal point for the widely spread community of the Savernake Forest with many families attracted from out of catchment. The number of children on roll with additional medical, learning and social needs is lower than national figures. The headteacher has been substantive since January 2015 following a period as acting headteacher.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Katharine's as a Church of England school are good

- The renewal of the Christian vision of the school, led by the effective leadership of the headteacher, ensures that all pupils are nurtured, challenged and valued, enabling them to flourish both spiritually and academically.
- The school's commitment to the values of honesty, friendship, respect and effort, which are understood as Christian, results in relationships across the whole school community that are positive and supportive.
- The importance placed on worship and the close relationship with the parish church secures the schools understanding of itself as a Christian community.

#### Areas to improve

- To develop a formal, integrated approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school which then leads to clearly defined development areas which are included in school planning.
- To ensure that the renewed Christian vision and values are embedded in all school policies and clearly expressed on the website to ensure all stakeholders can articulate their impact on academic standards and progress.
- To complete work on defining and auditing spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) opportunities in the new curriculum in order to better evaluate provision and impact.

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

St Katharine's School is a welcoming, inclusive community in a unique setting. The school's Christian character, understood through its close relationship with the church and its four core Christian values makes a significant contribution to the academic and personal development and wellbeing of all pupils. Parents and pupils are proud to be part of this rapidly developing school and to have been involved in the selection of its values. Pupils are able to discuss the values in depth and relate them to the teachings of Jesus and their learning experiences. One child cited effort as being the most important value and related it to how pupils feel challenged by teachers who provide 'purple' learning opportunities which are not too hard but require careful thought. Another talked about respect and how all pupils are respected and respect each other as Jesus taught, which meant he settled in really quickly when he arrived from a different school. Hence, relationships and behaviour between all members of the community are exemplary. Children enjoy coming to school because it offers a creative curriculum that takes full advantage of its rural setting and the local forest. They also value the individual attention they receive from staff who 'go the extra mile' and offer 'it's good to talk time' if it is needed. All this means pupils feel safe and valued so attendance is high as is their academic achievement, with attainment and progress being above national averages. The school is involved in an exciting local schools project to define and audit SMSC provision in the school. This is at an early stage but the impact is already seen in the many opportunities in the curriculum and in the environment for learners to explore their spirituality. An example of this is a curriculum which is based on providing opportunities for learners to explore, develop and deepen their own spirituality through prayer, discussion and reflection. The school environment also makes a strong contribution to the spiritual development of learners, through reflection areas in classrooms and displays which include inspirational thoughts and poems from children in the school as well as famous authors. RE contributes well to the Christian character of the school and to SMSC development. Learners have some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and of other faiths, but as yet are not so aware of differences within the Christian faith itself. There are planned opportunities to focus on other countries and cultures through topics such as Christmas around the world. Where possible, parents from other faith traditions are invited in to talk to children about their beliefs. These opportunities which supplement the enquiry based RE scheme develop pupils' respect for diversity and difference and enable children to become thoughtful and articulate about their own beliefs. The school is not yet outstanding as recent changes have not had time to be embedded, monitored and evaluated for impact.

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

Great value is placed on collective worship by all ages in the community. Its impact is clearly seen in all aspects of school life through its focus on the teachings of Jesus and its articulation of the core values and their relevance to the daily life of the school. One pupil said that 'the values represent how God wants us to live our lives'. Learners and staff say they enjoy worship and appreciate the time to come together and be peaceful at the start of the day. Parents also enjoy joining the school for celebration worship and special services in the church. They say they appreciate the new focus on celebrating the values rather than pure academic achievement and the chance to say thank you to each other. The impact of worship is also seen in the action taken by learners to support others through charitable fund raising. The headteacher and the incumbent work together to plan and deliver collective worship using 'open the book', the values and main festivals and seasons in the Christian year as themes. Staff value the support given by this planning which helps them to make class acts of worship meaningful and relevant. The school marks dates and festivals in the church calendar through special visits to the church which pupils see as 'our' church. An example of this is St Katherine's day when her story is told by the children and a wreath is laid on her memorial. All this ensures that children have a good understanding of Anglican traditions, practices and beliefs. One pupil described the Trinity as a triangle, with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit as the separate points but linked together by the lines to form one recognisable shape. He then went on to describe the values of the school as being like the points of a square, linked by lines but

with the Trinity at the centre. Pupils enjoy taking an active role in collective worship and especially acting out Bible stories. They like it when they have a chance to plan and lead collective worship and would like this to happen more often. Prayer and time for reflection are appreciated by adults and children. Reflection areas are used in all classrooms as a focus for worship but also as a provision for individual prayer and comments. Children also write prayers based on the current value which are displayed in the main entrance or hung on the tree in the grounds where they can sit and be quiet if they wish. Governors often attend worship, especially in the church and will talk informally with pupils about its impact. However, more formal systems need to be embedded so that the impact of worship on all members of the community can be evaluated and acted upon so further improvements are made.

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

School leadership at all levels is committed to ensuring that the school provides the best possible education for its pupils in a stimulating, nurturing, safe and happy environment based on Christian principles and individual attention. Since her appointment the Headteacher, fully supported by the governors, has been focused on renewing and raising the profile of the Christian character of the school. The four core values were selected through a careful process of consultation with all stakeholders. One member of staff said that 'no stone was left unturned'. This has resulted in values owned by all and celebrated as Christian during a very well attended banner blessing ceremony in the church. The process has now moved onto making sure that the current motto 'From little acorns great Oaks grow' is also understood in terms of the school's Christian foundation. As yet these new developments and their impact on learning are not fully articulated in school policy or on the website. There is sound evaluation of the standards achieved by learners, the impact of the 'growth mind-set' approach to learning and what the school needs to do to improve these. Governors monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' progress carefully. What is less secure is a formalised approach to the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a Church school, drawing on the experiences and perceptions of all governors, staff, parents and pupils which then lead directly to effective strategies for improvement. However, the vast majority of the areas from the last report have been addressed and statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. Staff at all levels feel supported in their professional development and feel privileged to be part of such a thriving school community. This was clearly seen with the new RE Leader who is receiving support through diocesan training and who already shows a sound knowledge of the new scheme of work and assessment. Partnerships with the local schools, the church, the local community and the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education are strong and mutually beneficial and contribute fully to school life and the Christian character of the school. Parents feel that the school welcomes them, listens to their views, resolves problems quickly and efficiently and includes them in its daily life. They value the school and the bespoke learning it offers to pupils and are prepared to travel to be part of it which is why numbers are increasing. As one parent said 'since the new headteacher has been in place we all see what the school could be'. Together, the community is making this vision a reality.

SIAMS report December 2015 St Katharine's CE Primary School, Savernake, Wiltshire. SN83BG