



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Durley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Durley Brook Road
Durley
Southampton
Hampshire
SO32 2AR

Diocese: Portsmouth

Local authority: Hampshire

Date of inspection: 11 July 2014

Date of last inspection: 11 December 2008

School's unique reference number: 116283

Headteacher: Kirstie Baines

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Durley is smaller than the average size primary school with 110 children arranged into four class groups. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number entitled to receive the pupil premium is well below the national average. The majority of children come from a white British heritage. The school community reflects the broad socio-economic range of backgrounds in the catchment area. Attendance is above the average for primary schools nationally.

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

- A strong emphasis on core Christian values makes a significant contribution to the well-being of children and adults in the school.
- Children articulate their thoughts and opinions on matters of faith and belief with considerable insight and maturity.
- Strong school leadership ensures that the continual development of the Christian foundation places the well-being and learning of children at the heart of the ethos.

Areas to improve

Create exciting opportunities for children to develop their spiritual awareness and to respond more deeply to higher level questions:

- Identify opportunities in the new curriculum for the open-ended exploration of difficult concepts with greater complexity.
- Refine assessment strategies in religious education (RE) to include children's responses to how core values contribute to a greater understanding of their learning.
- Develop the role of governors in their understanding of how to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of initiatives that develop greater spiritual awareness in children.

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

The process of identifying three core values has given the school a greater sense of purpose in what it means to be a church school. As a result of this the school has made excellent progress in moving forward as a church school since the previous inspection by placing Christian values explicitly at the heart of the children's learning and their well-being. These values have strengthened the Christian ethos by giving the school the framework to build on an existing culture of love, forgiveness and respect and more explicitly influencing all aspects of school life. Adults in school are very aware of these core values and articulate clearly what they mean. Children do this too; but do so with a vigour and vibrancy that reflects their views that love, forgiveness and respect are essential to their happiness and academic success in school. For example, older children are able to discuss with considerable maturity how love is interpreted in the school. They explain that 'it has to be more than just caring for someone. Care is part of love, but love has to go further than that'. Younger children explained how love in school is something that 'happens all the time' and is when you 'play with someone to help them if they are lonely'. The core values are becoming embedded in the children's learning and contribute to the school's culture of encouraging children to take risks and being allowed to learn from mistakes. This care for children is evident in the learning environment where children have the confidence to share their views in a supportive context. It makes an important contribution to the children's academic success and to the good progress they make in their learning where they achieve standards consistently above national expectations. The school is keen to take the impact of the core values further by developing the quality of opportunities for children to engage in higher level discussion through exploring questions that challenge their thinking. Religious education already makes an excellent contribution to this approach to learning and provides opportunities for children to reflect at a spiritual level on their learning. The school has a clear understanding of how RE can model how this could be done across all curriculum areas. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Children show compassion and empathy for others which are modelled by the adults in school. Parents feel that the school allows their children 'to be themselves' and that this gives their children the confidence to take risks in life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Acts of worship at Durley are special times in the school day when the whole school comes together in fellowship to celebrate and worship God. The gathering of classes, each leading in with their own candle into the hall, and the symbolic uniting of these candles on the worship table as children circle round, is a poignant moment that sets this time as a distinct act of worship. Yet, at the same time, it is an inclusive and integral part of the school day which children say is important because it gives them time to be still and think. Collective worship is outstanding because of the impact that this time for stillness and reflection makes to the lives of the whole school community. The introduction of simple words of welcome at the start of acts of worship reflects the school's Anglican tradition and helps children understand the expectations from worship. The inclusion of Trinity candles in each classroom helps children to develop their understanding of what this means to them. Children have positive attitudes and are eager to respond in worship. Acts of worship are clearly planned around explicit Christian values using Bible stories to teach children about how to make choices in their own lives. Children understand that these stories have meaning for them and relevance both in school and at home. Times for prayer and stillness are integral aspects of worship. Children respond with appropriate respect and reverence. They have an excellent and mature understanding of the meaning and purpose of prayer. Younger children explain how prayer is 'sending a message to God' and you know He hears it because 'He shines the light out for you to find Him'. Older children confidently share their thoughts and understand about prayer not always being answered saying that 'it is part of God's bigger plan' and that 'somehow we have to put our trust in that'. Children have good opportunities to be involved in acts of worship and there are effective procedures for gathering evidence of their views.

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

The headteacher is fully supported by her staff and governors in promoting a Christian ethos that has meaning and purpose for the whole school community. She has a very clear understanding of how a distinctive Christian ethos can make a difference to the lives of children and adults in the school. Her commitment to this has ensured that the school has made excellent progress since the previous inspection in taking the school forward. The support and involvement of the deputy headteacher and RE manager has been an important aspect of the successful development of the school as a church school. A particular strength of the leadership is the clarity with which they identify what needs to be done to continue to take the school forward. This is a reflection of accurate self-evaluation and the rigour of the monitoring and evaluative processes. Governors equally support the development of the Christian ethos and have a good understanding of the impact it makes on the children's learning and personal development. The rector makes a very important contribution to the life of the school through membership of the governing body but also through leading acts of worship. Since his arrival, links between school and church communities are growing in strength through a greater commitment from both. For example, the school hosts a successful messy church and is used by the church for some courses. Children consider that the church and the rector are an integral aspect of being a church school. Indeed they talk about both as being 'ours'. The partnership extends further in the way that both communities come together to be at the heart of the local community. Leadership of RE and collective worship is highly effective and reflects the positive profile that both have within the life of the school. The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship.

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