



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Manor Park Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Mellstock Avenue
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 2BH

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Date of inspection: 21 May 2014

Date of last inspection: 25 June 2009

School's unique reference number: 113791

Headteacher: Melanie Cridland

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Manor Park is a larger than average urban first school with 381 children aged from 4-9 years. The large majority of children are of a white British heritage and from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The number of children with learning needs is broadly in line with the national average as is the proportion eligible for the pupil premium. Children enter the school with levels of attainment generally in line with national expectations. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The school has increased in pupil numbers and is about to begin substantial building to cater for this growth. The school's senior leadership team has recently changed its roles and responsibilities.

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

- The high quality opportunities for children to reflect make a significant impact on their understanding of faith and belief.
- Acts of worship are central to the promotion of the school's Christian values and permeate all areas of school life.
- The excellent understanding of the purpose of being a church school by the leadership and management means that they are continually identifying ways to improve as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Improve and strengthen teachers' questioning skills so that children are challenged at greater depth as they develop their awareness of a personal spirituality.
- Develop the use of opportunities for reflection by involving children to a greater extent in taking ownership of where their reflection leads them.
- Ensure that the building development includes opportunities to create indoor and outdoor quiet areas that can be used by the whole school community for reflection.

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

All members of the school community, including children, staff, governors and parents, recognise that greater emphasis has been placed on explicit Christian values since the previous inspection. Members of school staff ensure that these values have a strong profile in the classroom and that they link to the children's own lives. This was evident during the inspection, both in observation of lessons and in what children said about them. Children identify values such as courage, justice and peace as examples of those that are important to them. They can link them directly to Christian teaching and explain how Biblical messages have relevance in their lives today. For example, Key Stage 2 children were very articulate when explaining the importance of being fair and treating each other equally as an example of justice because this is how God treats us and wants us to treat each other. The school has made significant progress in developing the quality of opportunities for children to have time to be still and reflect. Children are responding very positively to these times and say that they enjoy the peace and calm that allows them to think more deeply about important issues. The impact of this is that children create their own challenging questions and the school now needs to encourage children to have greater involvement in directing how they should be pursued. Teachers are skilful in questioning children and in supporting them to follow a line of enquiry that arises from their reflection. This could be strengthened even further so that children are challenged to greater depth as they explore their spiritual awareness. The school's Christian values are linked to their seven citizenship values which, along with their learning values, underpin teaching and learning. They contribute to the children's attainment which is above national expectations for the majority of children. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and characterised by a mutual respect and care for one another whether you are a child or adult. The school works hard to ensure that children are developing their understanding that Britain is a multi-cultural society and that Christianity a world faith. Children strongly believe that everyone should be treated with respect regardless of their faith or background. Religious education has a high profile in the school and is effective in promoting the school's Christian ethos and values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The introduction of the 'Values for Life' collective worship materials, which now underpins a more explicit act of worship based on Christian values with a greater emphasis on reflection of what those values mean, has transformed collective worship by placing it more centrally at the heart of the school day. This is already happening to a high level and the school is aware that more can still be done to involve children in taking ownership of how worship themes evolve over each half term. Collective worship is outstanding at the moment because of the contribution that an explicit programme of Christian values, related to Biblical teaching, has to the children's growing perceptions of what faith and belief mean to them. Children know that collective worship is an essential part of being a church school and that it is a distinct time in the school day to 'learn about God' and say prayers to Him and Jesus. Older children in particular express clearly that having time to think about values and how they can help them in their lives is important. Planning for collective worship is thorough and ensures that there is time to gather and prepare for the worship, that there are opportunities for children to participate and enjoy their worship with messages that leave children with clear ideas about how they live them out in the school day ahead. There are good opportunities to pray and be still in the school day both formally and informally. Children have a very mature understanding that prayer 'may not always work out in the way that we might want it to' but 'God will have His reasons for doing this'. As one child added, 'we should trust that God knows what He is doing'. Acts of worship provide good opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the Trinity. For example, younger children explained that 'God is power' because He created the world and 'Jesus is His Son who shows us how to be kind'. The introduction of a weekly reflection worship based in each class has enhanced the overall worship experience considerably. Children speak enthusiastically about them saying that they value the opportunity to be still and have some peace in their lives. Regular feedback from

interviews with children enables worship leaders to monitor their impact on children and identify where further improvements can be made. For example, by looking more carefully at how the language used to explore the more abstract values could be tailored more effectively for the different age groups.

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

The leadership and management, including governors, are committed to developing a distinctively Christian ethos that puts children at the centre of everything they do. All members of the school community recognise that the school's Christian character has become more overt during the last two years with greater emphasis on values and reflection in particular. The headteacher is fully supported by her senior leaders through the Curriculum and Learning Teams (CALT) that have responsibility for collective worship and religious education. Self-evaluation as a church school is strong because of the links between the various strands that monitor effectiveness. For example, a foundation governors' focus group meets with the learning teams and have undertaken learning and ethos walks around the school to gather evidence of the impact of the school's values. The inclusion of priorities in the school development plan matched with those in the CALT action plan and then reflected in ongoing staff training is evidence of the effectiveness of these links. The relationship between the school and local church has been considerably strengthened since the previous inspection. There is a more proactive approach between the two communities in identifying opportunities to work together more regularly. For example, there are regular displays of children's work in the church and each invites the other to have a stall at fairs and fetes. A successful venture has been the club run by church members for children at the school which uses the school's values as its weekly theme. The vicar is well known to the children and regularly leads acts of worship. The development of the CALT teams and the programme of staff development in RE and collective worship, as well as staff involvement in the self-evaluation process, is evidence of the school's commitment to develop all staff for the benefit of the children by raising the profile of the Christian ethos. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report May 2014 Manor Park CE VC First School Dorchester DT1 2BH