



## **National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report**

### **St David's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Dinham Road  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX4 4EE

#### **Diocese: Exeter**

Local authority: Devon  
Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013  
Date of last inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013  
School's unique reference number: 113353  
Headteacher: Mrs Francesca Brinicombe  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Daphne Spitzer NS37

#### **School context**

St David's is a small primary school situated close to the centre of the city of Exeter, an area of high density housing. There are 99 children on roll, arranged in 4 classes. Although the majority of the children are of white British heritage a significant minority now have English as an additional language. The numbers of children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities are in line with the national average. There is a higher than average turnover of pupils. The majority of the teaching staff have been appointed since the last inspection.

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

The distinctive Christian character is reflected in the happy, inclusive Christian ethos. This has a positive impact on the children's academic, personal and spiritual development. Children take great pride in their school and its community.

#### **Established strengths**

- Harmonious relationships between all children based on the Christian values of friendship, trust and forgiveness
- Good leadership by the headteacher in providing direction for the school's distinctive Christian character
- The valuable part played by the religious education subject leader in supporting the development of the school's distinctive Christian character

#### **Focus for development**

- Regularly involve children in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship
- Include a strand for the improvement of the school's distinctive Christian character in the Strategic School Improvement Plan, monitor and evaluate by embedding the role of the ethos committee
- Provide a greater focus during the day for prayer and quiet reflection

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

St David's Church of England Primary School is a warm and welcoming Christian community where all feel valued and special and enjoy daily life because school is an

inclusive and stimulating place. The warm welcome is a strong feature of the school's distinctive Christian character something noted by parents of all faiths, or none. Christian values permeate daily life at school. This is evident in the very good relationships at all levels that are a strength of the school. It is reflected in the way a child said that they live by Christ's command 'to treat others as you wish to be treated'. A very effective recent review of the school's Christian mission has successfully raised the profile of the core Christian values of compassion, friendship, respect, forgiveness, justice and trust. Children said that the greatest of their values is friendship because it incorporates all the others and as one child said each of their values has 'a bit of Jesus and His teaching'. Caring and supportive relationships are promoted very well by the regular 'family group' afternoon sessions. Children speak very highly of their teachers who they believe create a happy school. Children commented that they felt 'privileged' to be able to come to St David's. Spiritual development is promoted well. It is evident in children's good understanding of the Christian value of compassion, in particular. It is also promoted well in the school curriculum such as in the way the school visited the cathedral recently to take part in a photography workshop. However during the day there are no times set aside for quiet reflection or prayer. Religious education (RE) develops spiritual awareness very effectively. This was reflected in a lesson in the youngest class when excellent teaching methods ensured that children understood the Christian belief of the extent of God's love for them. One child said 'He's special, He loves us more than that much of sand!' In another lesson the Christian value of forgiveness was clearly understood to be associated with the Christian symbol of the cross. The school environment promotes spiritual development very well. This is reflected in the current focus on the reasons for Comic Relief Day which permeates the school day. The sense of belonging to a Christian community is apparent in the beautiful mural on the school wall in which everyone contributed.

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

Collective worship is an important part of the school day at St David's. All teaching staff attend; emphasising the role of worship in developing a sense of Christian fellowship. Children demonstrate quiet reverence in the way they enter and leave the hall, as observed, which also reinforces its importance. Children enjoy collective worship because they know they will learn about Christ's life and His teachings. Worship also strongly promotes the school's distinctive Christian character. This was reflected recently when the uniqueness of each child to God was celebrated and remembered by the spectacular displays of a special star for each child. Worship promotes spiritual development very effectively. This was seen in the inclusive way all contributions are valued, such as a prayer said spontaneously by a child from another faith tradition. Spiritual awareness is also promoted by singing hymns, as noted in a children's comment that she considered hymns were 'sung prayers'. Worship promotes Anglican tradition effectively, for instance, by the weekly use of the adjacent church for worship led in turn by the two clergy. However, simple liturgy such as a greeting, a coloured cloth to signify the church's season or response prayers have yet to be introduced. The clergy complement the school's worship theme very well and use interactive methods to reinforce their message and ensure the children's enjoyment of the occasion. This is evident in the comment from a child that the curate did things in a 'fun way that were really serious' such as when he talked about the Christian value of compassion using the parable of the Good Samaritan. The headteacher and RE subject leader together coordinate worship and are very effective in this role. Although planning for worship is detailed and effective, ways to enhance this further are being explored. Children are active at times during worship and contribute in a variety of ways, though as yet there are few opportunities to lead.

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

The good leadership of the headteacher in providing direction for the school's distinctive Christian has had a significant impact since the last inspection. She has led the governors, in developing the school's new core Christian values which are shared and understood by the whole school community. The leadership's strong Christian focus on inclusion is a strength of the school and key to its success. This is evident in the way new

parents speak highly of the warmth of the welcome they receive from everyone when they join the school community and others say it has a 'village school feel'. The increasingly international and multi cultural nature of the school is welcomed and celebrated. Parents say the school's new Christian values have a very positive impact on their children's behaviour and that they flourish in the Christian family school environment. Parents are fully supportive of the school's leadership and say they feel fully informed about school life and involved in the consultation process where appropriate. At present there is no strand of the Strategic School Improvement Plan for the development of the school's Christian foundation. However, much work has been undertaken over for the last couple of years in this area of school life, for instance in the way core Christian values now permeate the school day. RE is led well by a newly appointed teacher who is highly qualified and passionate about the subject. She works very well with the PPA teacher who specialises in the teaching of RE in KS2. She is also keen to develop the role of RE within the planning of the school's new curriculum. In other ways too, the RE subject leader's contributions have already made a positive impact to the leadership of this church school. This is evident in her leadership of the governors' ethos committee which is now monitoring the impact of the school's Christian values. She is also helping to strengthen the links with the church community as seen by her class's contributions to the church's Mothering Day service. Links with the diocese are good and the school has benefitted from training. The partnership with the church is developing well and good links with other faiths communities enhance areas of school life such as RE. The school also has developed overseas links by supporting a child through a charity.

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