



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

**Norton St Philip Church of England Voluntary Aided First School**

**Church Street, Norton St Philip, BA2 7LU**

**Diocese: Bath & Wells**

Local authority: **Somerset**

Dates of inspection: **28th January 2014**

Date of last inspection: **19<sup>th</sup> November 2008**

School's unique reference number: **123836**

Headteacher: **Carol Watkinson**

Inspector's name and number: **Wendy Simmons - 127**

**School context**

Norton St Philip is a smaller than average primary school and the 49 pupils come from the village and surrounding area. Pupils are mainly of white British origin and eligibility for free school meals is below average. Standards are above average and the number of children identified with special needs is above average. Two children have statements of need. The Victorian building and purpose built block used for the independent Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 provides adequate accommodation. The extensive grounds offer opportunities to develop creative, spiritual and curriculum resources.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Norton St Philip as a Church of England school are good.**

**Established strengths**

- The relationship and partnership with the Rector and congregation of St Philip and St James church
- The creative curricular opportunities which support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development
- The care, guidance and support for all pupils

**Areas to improve**

- Identify explicitly Christian values to support the implicit value structure already present
- Establish a formal system for monitoring and evaluation of collective worship to provide responses from both adults and children

- Establish strategies for the monitoring and assessment of Religious Education

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

The motto 'Learning, Caring, Sharing' together with the Christian values of 'Love and Respect' and 'Forgiveness, Responsibility and Loyalty' noted during worship and Religious Education (RE), are the basis of the school's Christian ethos. Although these values are implicit within the school and have yet to be made more explicit, pupils and staff clearly demonstrate their Christian values through their very good links with the church community and their understanding and knowledge of the Bible and the life of Jesus. Children live out these values and this has enabled an effective learning environment resulting in above average achievement. All pupils make good progress and standards are above average in all areas. Christian symbols, displays and reflective areas are visible throughout the school enhancing the school's Christian character. For example the cross and Epiphany display in the school hall. The impact of 'Learning Walks' and 'Forest School Activities' both on and off site make a good contribution to the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The good provision for RE, which is largely discrete but with some cross curricular experiences, supports children's attainment and progress. Children are aware of the wider world and a number of charities are supported, including a Kenyan child, The British heart Foundation and Children in Need. Parents value the care, guidance and support for all children and speak highly of the Christian atmosphere. The outstanding links with St Philip and St James church honour the school's Anglican foundation. Some children attend the church 'P and J club' and their leaders have links with the school. The parents association is active in fundraising and relationships between staff, governors, parents and the community are good, supporting all children and contributing to the Christian distinctiveness of Norton St Philip Church of England School.

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

Collective worship is managed well with the headteacher as co-ordinator. Planning includes SEAL themes, bible stories, festival and celebrations from the church year. The church congregation supported school worship with 'Open the Book' bible stories during the recent clergy vacancy. This has had a significant impact on children's knowledge of the Bible and the Christian narrative. The new Rector introduced the 'Christmas Experience' in the church, where children were able to 'walk' the journey of Mary & Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. 'Open the Book' continues and the Rector is a regular worship leader. The good worship observed, led by the headteacher, helped children to understand the concepts of 'loyalty and love'. Using the Bible story of Ruth and Naomi, children had the opportunity to explore their own feelings through reflection. Children sang very well and music was used before and after worship. During prayer children were encouraged to focus on the lighted candle as the headteacher used an extempore prayer followed by children saying the school prayer. All essential aspects of good worship were present on this occasion. Prayer is central to school life and used before lunch and after school. Children write their own prayers and these are displayed and produced in books. Children's attitudes and responses to worship are generally good and they can recall worship in church, particularly the Harvest service. Festival and special occasion services in church empower church/school links and develop positive attitudes with the whole community; however their understanding of Christian belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit is currently limited. Although governors attend worship on occasions, monitoring and evaluation is in the early stages of development. The next step is the adoption of a more formal evaluation system, so that adults and learners'

comments can be regularly analysed and contribute to ongoing improvement of the worship experience offered to the school community.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Standards in RE are above average and in line with other core subjects. Achievement in RE is good and pupils generally make good progress from their starting point. Teaching and learning in the two lessons observed was judged good, with children making at least good progress in line with their ability. The pace of the lessons was good and pupils were challenged to understand the deeper meaning behind the themes explored. Resources provided were effective and the impact of the use of technology, through a video clip in Key Stage one and the use of Ipads for research in Key Stage two, enhanced pupils' learning and understanding. In each lesson children displayed good learning from previous lessons. Year 2 children were introduced to 'Jonah and the Whale' as part of their unit on 'How should we live our lives'? Children reflected upon good and bad choices and cause and effect. Differentiated activities showed that children were making generally good progress in line with their ability.

The Key Stage two lesson based upon the unit 'Pilgrimages' was part of the preparation for a visit to Wells Cathedral for the year 4 leavers' activity day. Introduced to a number of pilgrimage locations in previous lessons, the concept of a Pilgrimage and why people make them was discussed and to help set the scene. The impact of learning and singing of a Taize chant provided a spiritual moment for the class. The more they sang the chant the more reflective and calm they became. The teacher's questioning technique helped children to dig deeply for meaning about how they were feeling, leading to words such as 'resting', 'meditation' and 'reflection'. Research activities using Ipads and maps, were well differentiated and supported children's good progress in line with their ability. RE makes a good contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character and has a significant impact upon learners' spiritual development in particular. RE is planned and delivered according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Learning objectives are targeted to meet the needs of mixed age and ability classes. Marking is sensitive and developmental and sometimes poses questions. Assessment is in the early stages of development which highlights this as a key area for improvement. Children study Judaism and Hinduism in addition to the primary study of Christianity. Children's visit to a Hindu temple, and a display of Jewish artefacts in the Reception/Year 1 classroom, supports their learning about and from world faiths. Evidence from work scrutiny shows that progress across the school is generally good with learning in RE supporting overall achievement.

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

The impact of good leadership by headteacher and governors has secured a school environment where all children can be safe, happy and make good progress. The school vision and values are implicit in every aspect of school life; however a more explicit framework of identified Christian values owned by all is needed. Key issues from the previous report have been addressed. The headteacher and school are very well supported by the Rector who comes with fresh ideas to support and enhance the Christian ethos. As collective worship co-ordinator and RE subject leader, the headteacher ensures a secure collective worship planning format and an RE curriculum based upon recognised study units. The impact of collective worship and RE significantly enhances the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children. The impact of Christian distinctiveness contributes to attainment in RE and is in line with other core subjects and above national curriculum levels.

School leaders are exploring new ways of linking with partnership schools and children are benefitting from shared activities with other schools. For example, a local headteacher came to lead a learning walk with pupils from both schools by exploring the environment and developing pupils' learning through discussion and wonderment at their discoveries. The school regularly uses learning walks for governors to monitor and evaluate provision and resources. Governors are involved in the self- evaluation process and are well acquainted with data, to understand pupil progress. The school offers an impressive range of after school activities led by a variety of teachers, parents and locally sourced leaders. This is a school looking to the future with support from the local church and community. Diocesan links through visits and training are good. Strong leadership, parental, and community partnerships make a very positive impact upon children's learning and understanding of the world around them.

SIAMS report January 2014 Norton St Philip First School, Norton St Philip, BA