

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Durweston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School			
Address	Church Road, Durweston, Blandford Forum, Dorset, DT11 0QA		
Date of inspection	6 February 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided primary
Diocese	Salisbury	URN	113798

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Durweston is a primary school with 122 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. Since the previous denominational inspection, there is a new substantive headteacher in post.

The school's Christian vision

Feed the mind, nurture the spirit, free the imagination.
'Stand true in what you believe. Be courageous, be strong. And do everything with love.'
1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Key findings

- Dedicated staff and governors ensure this is a nurturing Christian family community, enabling all adults and pupils to flourish.
- Pupils eloquently tell the detail of the Christian story as a natural and integral part of their everyday lives, clearly demonstrating their thinking and learning gleaned from collective worship and religious education (RE).
- The strong partnership between church and school, both special places in the heart of this village community, richly contributes to the spiritual journeys of all.
- Feeding minds, nurturing the spirit, freeing the imagination within a spirit of joy and love is central to this school's purpose. However, deepening the biblical underpinning of this vision is ongoing.
- The worshipping life of this school includes an annual Easter communion service which enables pupils to be well-acquainted with the symbolism of key Christian festivals. However, pupils' understanding of principal Anglican saints is less well developed.

Areas for development

- Embed the ongoing assessment in RE, which includes developing pupils' self-reflection, to inform progress.
- Deepen the school community's knowledge of the Christian story which underpins the school's vision and values.
- Enable pupils to encounter people of diverse faiths and beliefs more frequently to nurture their spiritual and cultural development; and enrich pupils' knowledge of St Nicholas, to whom their parish church is dedicated.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Durweston Primary School has experienced significant changes in staffing but now this small, rural Christian family community is enjoying a much stronger and more settled way of life. Staff know the pupils really well. Everything is approached with compassion and joy and in a spirit of courage on the road to school improvement. Governors monitor closely, firmly believing that if pupils are secure and loved, they are motivated to reach their potential. Close partnerships exist with the diocese, with the school benefitting greatly from training and support. The parish church is adjacent to the school, and is a much loved and well-used building, with a special place in the heart of this community. Everyone readily explains the school's vision. Deepening the knowledge of its biblical underpinning from one of St Paul's letters is ongoing. Christian values are embodied daily, with love over-arching all school life.

Nurturing the spirit is key to supporting pupils and very much a part of Forest School activities, where pupils show resilience and have courage through new skills and experiences. The school environment is a happy place which feeds the mind so pupils go on to the next stage of their lives with a love of learning. Staff steadfastly track small steps of progress, finding areas of the curriculum which richly motivate pupils, such as cross country. The ability to persevere is seen in how pupils apply themselves to music lessons, when whole classes learn an instrument, such as the clarinet. Over the past three years, pupils have been nurtured and grown in self-belief, freeing their imagination. Reluctant readers delight in the joy of reading. Pupils who may find learning difficult thrive through a range of responsibilities which the school gives to them. This is because the warmth of care and attention is central to the wellbeing of pupils and adults. Pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy their time in school. They say if they take a minute to think about what is going on, then they are in the right mind-set to succeed. Some cite that reflection time in collective worship 'helps you get through. If you have a word with yourself you can get better.' They draw on feeding the mind, nurturing the spirit, freeing the imagination and doing everything in love, helping them stick to what they believe. They contemplate how they can be helpful and be good friends, thinking of God the creator in class.

Durweston pupils know that it only takes one person to make a difference in their village or the world. One pupil initiative was to carry out a survey of sustainable plastics in the village. A great deal of money was raised for the local hospice. The school community has also recently adopted an Australian koala bear named Paul, whom pupils are keen to support in his orphanage. They are genuinely caring because Christian values are instilled in them. They respectfully look after the environment and cherish it. Termly 'welly walks' help strengthen the body and mind. Pupils take big questions and continue their discussions with parents and family at home. Recently, pupils discussed leaving the family community of the European Union.

Positive learning behaviours are celebrated all the time. One pupil offered, 'If you don't have something nice to say, don't say it!' The head boy and girl run, organise and lead the school citizenship box. They nominate pupils each Friday who have shown the school's values in practice, proud of all they have achieved. Some pupils, curious about the natural environment, recently went on a wildlife walk with Ben Fogle, and were inspired by him and nature. Staff welfare is regularly monitored by governors, employing courage and compassion at different levels. Staff respectfully challenge each other as leaders. In turn, St Nicholas Church supports the foundation governors and the school financially as well as in prayer.

Together, church and school help pupils to know and understand key Christian beliefs, such as belonging to the family of the church through baptism. One pupil said that, 'Learning about the Nativity helps me to understand the true meaning of Christmas and Jesus' birth.' Much work on understanding the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit has taken place this term. The Easter end of term service of Holy Communion is very well established, enabling pupils to understand the symbolism of bread and wine. The Remembrance-tide service, with pupils and villagers taking part, is totally integrated with St Nicholas Church. The school choir wear red sashes when they sing at Christian festivals celebrated in church through the year. Hymns are chosen from the worship box. One pupil said, 'Singing 'The Best Gift' makes me feel very happy.' Village traditions are upheld by pupils. This includes shroving when flowers are distributed through the village on Shrove Tuesday by pupils. Prayer and reflection is integral to the school's worshipping life. The school prayer box is well used. The end of day prayer calls on God to keep them safe. Pupils know Paul's letters always end in the grace, recalling

graces they write which are shared every lunchtime. The 'Open The Book' team lead worship regularly, sharing Bible stories and 'making it fun. They get kids involved and tell it in a way to make everyone listen.' The school's reflection books show the impact of the messages in collective worship, which changes lives. However, pupils' knowledge of saints, such as St Nicholas, is less well developed.

Pupils at Durweston learn what living a faith really means and what would feed other people's minds within a safe place to discuss and question belief. They eloquently and eagerly tell the detail of the Christian story, explaining how the temple curtain was split in two. They speak about Ascension as, 'Jesus made a speech and was literally raised up into the clouds.' They explain Pentecost in their own words as, 'fire coming on the disciples' shoulders. They made a church, that's what Pentecost is: Happy birthday to the Church.' One pupil cited Paul who 'went on a journey to tell everyone about the life of Jesus'. RE touches everything. Using assessment grids helps to develop depth in pupils' learning and thinking. However, meeting people of diverse faith and belief is less well developed.

At Durweston pupils are helped to think about the bigger picture of life, which is different for everyone. The whole community is on a journey to improve their relationship with God, self and others. One parent expressed how 'God is watching over them' as they sing with joy so even the youngest pupils delight in going to church.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The quality of teaching and learning in RE at Durweston is consistently good. Regular monitoring by the dedicated and committed RE subject leader and governors is accurate. Progress for all groups of pupils is good. All pupils flourish academically and personally in RE.

Headteacher	Nicola Brooke
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244