



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Selwood Academy – Anglican/Methodist Middle School.

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Bath and North East Somerset

Date of last inspection: 3rd June, 2009

Date of inspection: 12th June, 2014

School's unique reference number: 137741

Headteacher: Mrs Jean Hopegood

Inspector's name and number: Rev John Angle (119)

School context

Selwood Church of England/Methodist school converted to academy status in December 2011. The Academy's 654 pupils are aged 9 to 13. The present Headteacher took up her post in January 2014. The Academy is on an attractive 14 acre site serving parts of the town of Frome and the surrounding villages. It works in close partnership with other schools and churches in the area. There is a small speech and language resource base on site which serves a wide area. The Academy has the Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People, the Sports Mark Award and the Green Flag award as part of the Eco Schools programme. It is designated as a specialist performing arts school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Selwood Academy as a Church of England/Methodist school is outstanding

- Christian values permeate the life of the school. They are strongly and effectively promoted and celebrated in a wide variety of ways
- The Head, ably supported by all the staff and governors sensitively and enthusiastically leads the school as a distinctive Christian community
- Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The focus on Spirituality and a philosophical approach in Religious Education is an outstanding feature of the school
- There is an outstanding, nurturing, and caring inclusive ethos which serves as a strong foundation for children's growth and development both academically, socially, personally and emotionally
- Children enjoy a safe, friendly and secure learning environment which enables them to be confident, to flourish and to achieve their best
- Behaviour and relationships are outstanding

Area to improve

- Integrate Collective Worship themes, the Citizenship syllabus and the development of Spirituality so as to give an even stronger and a more united focus on the distinctively Christian values in the school.

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

Distinctively Christian values have a high profile in the school. There is a tangible and very strong Christian ethos embedded into all aspects of school life. Christian values and a sense of the spiritual are made explicit at every opportunity within aspects of the curriculum, relationships, organisational structures and a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. Staff, visitors, members of the community and parents observe and acknowledge the impact that the distinctively Christian ethos has on children's quality of life, their personal development and their achievements.

The school's motto 'Each child is MY child' articulates the school's concern for every individual, an example being that every child in the school receives a birthday card. There is a robust tracking of pupils, individual programmes of support and regular contact with parents. This results in good standards of progress and achievement which is above the national average in all subjects. The trend in all pupils' achievements by the end of year eight is upward. The area Communication and Resource Unit based in the school ensures in a most effective and caring way that children with special needs are included in all aspects of school life and develop according to their individual needs.

Staff's positive attitudes and the encouragement of Christian values of joy, peace and justice create an ethos in which children want to achieve. Strategies reflecting grace and using restorative justice, drama and 'periods of reflective inclusion' (PORI) deflect those at risk of unacceptable behaviour. It also encourages inclusive responses and behaviour. The value given to pupils and strong parental support for the school ensure very good attendance figures.

Children love their school and love coming to school. "Everyone is friendly and caring and they make you feel safe" said one girl. The outstanding work of teachers in giving pastoral care is supported by peer counselling and pupils' daily lunch time SOS provision – Supporters of Selwood. Excellent transition arrangements for year five ensure an easy settling into their new school. Children are inspired to be creative, imaginative and curious, and within this inclusive environment achievement is enthusiastically celebrated.

There is an ethos of respect, tolerance and understanding born out of the belief that all are made in the image of God. Christian values are discussed with local clergy, visiting speakers, within the school's Ethos Group and also in Citizenship lessons. They are exemplified through Bible Stories, the lives of well known Christians and stories from various religious traditions. Children say these stories have an impact on their behaviour and relationships. Prayer and reflection are an integral part of school life, as a result of a whole school approach to the interpretation and understanding of spirituality.

On the day of the inspection the whole staff began the day with prayer! Religious Education makes an outstanding contribution to the school's Christian character and learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A four year syllabus encourages a philosophical approach to Biblical aspects of moral dilemmas, the variety of beliefs in world religions, religious identities and life's 'big questions'. A wide variety of learning styles; debate and questioning, child friendly language in assessment and target setting and opportunity for reflection ensure that religious education is of a high standard.

Children are made aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith and they have respect for difference and diversity. They show empathy and concern for communities through their charitable activities and the newly formed Global and Local Outreach' (GLO) group.

The school supports a school in Ghana, and earlier this year a boat was built in the school entrance hall to receive gifts for victims in the Somerset flood disaster. Both the Anglican, Methodist and local independent churches are visited by pupils and provide resources to encourage an understanding of the diversity of Christian practice and tradition. Opportunities are also given to visit other faith communities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Acts of collective worship take place in the middle of the school day, indicative of the absolutely central place worship holds. Great value is placed on collective worship by all members of the school community, and it has a significant impact on all stakeholders. Collective worship is inclusive and takes a variety of forms in the school week; more intimate and reflective class worship and also larger whole year or combined year gatherings.

Questionnaires and discussion with children and their parents indicate that collective worship encourages questioning, reflection, changed attitudes, action and prayer. In a whole school questionnaire only 27% of pupils said that the collective worship theme of the week never made them think. The rest said it made them think 'often' or 'sometimes'. Pupils were observed having the confidence to organise, lead and speak in collective worship and say prayers. All learn the Lord's Prayer, children write their own prayers and there is a 'Selwood School Prayer'. Prayer is a very significant part of collective worship and the whole of school life. Other opportunities for prayer and reflection develop from collective worship in a specially furnished quiet room called The Haven, and in outside gardens and quiet areas. Consideration of 'God's wonderful world' often appears in weekly collective worship themes as do the moral demands of the environment.

Responses to collective worship therefore spill over into the outside natural world in a variety of ways, particularly in the Eco schools programme. When presented with human need in collective worship, pupils respond eagerly and generously. Drama and music contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual reflection and consideration of moral issues. Biblical material, Christian teaching and the sharing of the features of a variety of Christian traditions all contribute to the school's focus on a distinctively Christian ethos and values. Quotes from the Bible are presented in a relevant way; in displays around the school, in the entrance vestibule and in the Head's blog. The weekly themes are always linked with the Bible.

An act of worship on humility commented on the Old Testament prophet's words, 'What does God require of us...it is to act justly, to love mercy and walk humbly in God's way?'. Through collective worship and RE pupils appreciate the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ and the way in which His teaching can impact, inspire and influence their lives and the society in which we live. Guest speakers from several local churches lead acts of worship on rotation bringing their own traditions, practices and ways of worship into the life of the school and also highlighting the Christian festivals. This gives a rich and varied experience of worship to pupils.

There is an excellent and comprehensive collective worship policy in place. Collective worship is enthusiastically led in a way which connects with the children and their levels of understanding. INSET is provided for staff and collective worship is well resourced. There have been significant recent developments in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship which has led directly to change and continuous improvement in delivery and content, and to a greater awareness of the impact collective worship has on all learners.

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

The Head brings outstanding leadership to the school and with staff and governors consistently and confidently lives out and promotes a vision of the school which reflects Christian values. The school web site states, 'Our Christian ethos is central to all that we try to achieve'. The Christian ethos drives school improvement and governance. Coupled with warm hospitality the Christian ethos is something that is palpable to all visitors.

The atmosphere and culture within the school is distinctively Christian. In a recent whole school survey, Christian values of grace, love, justice, joy, service and peace were identified as being evident on a daily basis in the school by over half of the pupils. Other values were also identified as being present. Leaders actively encourage and evaluate the development of spirituality in school life through the governors Education Welfare committee and the school Ethos committee. Leaders also encourage continuing professional development in this area for all staff, particularly for middle managers. This is an important part of the school's Staff Development Policy. Frequent use is made of Diocesan training opportunities.

Governors visit the school regularly and take part in school visits. These are evaluated and discussed to see where effective strategies for improvements can be made which will benefit pupils. Leaders make every effort to overcome educational, social and economic disadvantage for all learners.

The discussions and planning for the appointment of a new Headteacher who would take the school forward as a distinctively Christian community challenged governors and gave them opportunity to identify what it means in practice, to lead an outstanding church school. In all school appointments applicants are required to articulate their own response to the school's vision and values and offer ways in which they feel they can personally contribute. The whole curriculum is informed by a distinctively Christian vision and all policy reviews are developed within the framework of the school's Christian ethos.

The change in RE to Religion and Philosophy (R&P) was encouraged by school leadership in order to support progress in RE at key stage 4 and also to help develop in pupils a more exciting, questioning and relevant approach to their religious education. Children make excellent progress and there is high added value in achievement and a greater depth in religious and moral understanding and spiritual development. The department is effectively led by an outstanding, well qualified and experienced member of staff. Both collective worship and religious education are given a high priority by school management which enables highly effective teaching and learning in both areas.

School leadership has developed excellent relationships with local church leaders, which helps to enrich the lives and develop the spiritual understanding of all learners. Local clergy are very effective and committed in supporting the schools Christian character. Parents also are very committed to the school and their children's learning and are regularly engaged by the school in understanding what it means to be a church school with a distinctive Christian ethos. They appreciate the 'open door' policy that exists in the school and the way in which any problems are dealt with quickly, sensitively and effectively.

Parents understand the school is a church school and what that means; as one parent said 'It does what it says on the tin!' The school has a distinctive Christian ethos and imparts Christian values, and it shows!

SIAMS report. June 2014. Selwood Academy - Anglican/Methodist Middle School, Frome BA11 2EF.