



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

### Feniton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Station Road  
Feniton  
Honiton  
Devon  
EX14 3EA

**Diocese:** Exeter

Local authority: Devon

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014

Date of last inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008

School's unique reference number: 113433

Headteacher: Mr Colin Butler (Executive head) Mrs Amanda Parsons (Head of school)

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Daphne Spitzer NS No 37

#### School context

Feniton Church of England Primary School serves the village of Feniton and other villages in the surrounding area near the town of Ottery St Mary. There are 205 children on roll, including a preschool class. The majority of children are of white British heritage. The numbers with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities are below the national average as is the number of children eligible to receive the Pupil Premium. In September 2013 the school federated with Tipton St John Church of England Primary School to form the Otter Valley Federation under the executive leadership of the existing headteacher, appointed since the last inspection.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Feniton Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The role of collective worship in promoting depth to the quality of children's spirituality which has a strong impact on their achievement and personal development
- Excellent partnership between the church and school communities which is mutually beneficial enabling all to feel part of the extended church school family
- Strong links with a community in Melanesia which creates an explicit sense of a global Christian family

#### Areas to improve

- Develop a formal method of recording the school's performance as a church school in order to further improve its self evaluation process
- Provide regular opportunities for the religious education leader to observe lessons to further raise standards of teaching and learning

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

Feniton Church of England Primary School is a welcoming, friendly Christian community. Distinctive Christian values, known as the school's HEART values, have a strong impact on the children's academic achievement, personal development and well being. They are integral to daily life and are underpinned explicitly by the love of God which is shared and fully understood by the whole school community. Children say they know that God loves them and that they can trust and 'depend on Him.' They say they can trust their friends and their teachers to help them in life. The calm Christian ethos which promotes times of quiet and reflection provide a happy and secure setting in which children flourish. Children understand the Christian value of compassion very well. They talk in a sensitive way of helping someone who may be in need of a friend. One child said she would 'watch out for them' as well as 'go over and make them feel happy'. The Christian value of service is embedded and noted in the way older children volunteer each week to serve school lunch to local senior citizens. There are a wide variety of opportunities provided to promote spiritual awareness including within the curriculum which are highly effective. It is clearly evident in the vicar's role in school life, for example in the way she leads groups of children in discussions on spiritual matters. A children's ethos committee enthusiastically monitors the impact of the school's Christian values. Their actions clearly proclaim that the roots of the school's values lie in the Christian faith. The gospel canoe from Melanesia placed on the school's worship table is a powerful spiritual image of the strong links that exists between the school and a Christian community overseas. It ensures that children's understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith is deeply embedded.

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

Collective worship is central to daily life at Feniton Church of England Primary School. It is a lively, vibrant and a wholly Christian experience, as observed. Children understand worship enables them to learn about God and special people in the Bible as well as their own Christian values. They say that this is relevant and has meaning for them on a personal level. The quality of leadership is inspiring and this ensures that children too want to lead and fully participate in worship. Children regularly plan and lead worship as part of the weekly programme. They recognise that their school's Christian values are promoted very effectively by daily worship and easily link them to Christ's teaching and His life. Worship has a significant effect on children's spiritual development. Frequent opportunities for reflection are provided as well as for prayer at a personal level. Prayer takes a central role in the life of the school as seen by the way the children discuss their end of day prayer and the focus on prayer spaces with older children. A recent Worship theme 'Big Questions' introduced the whole school to issues around the Christian value of forgiveness and had a powerful effect on children's thinking. Children are developing an understanding of the Trinity from prayers and blessings used in worship. The school has planned to increase children's understanding further during a religious education (RE) day planned for the summer. Monitoring and evaluating worship by children is fully embedded. Governors led by the vicar, also monitor worship ensuring that it strongly influences the life of the school.

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

Standards in religious education (RE) are excellent. Attainment for the majority of children is at least in line with national expectations. Progress between key stages is good. This is due to teaching which is either good or outstanding as observed. The good progress made by all children is also the result of the outstanding tracking and monitoring by the subject leader. She ensures that intervention strategies target individual children as well as groups so that their attainment is increased. Children are inspired by the subject. They enjoy RE because they say the lessons are 'really fun'; 'learning about other people,' and understanding that in RE there is 'no right or wrong' answer. Learning observed in the oldest children's class was of the highest

quality because well chosen activities were both challenging and exciting. Excellent questioning skills promoted deep thinking using analysis and interpretation of prior knowledge. Children demonstrate an excellent knowledge of Christianity. RE plays an important role in the school's creative curriculum. This was noted in a class which were learning about the lives of early Christians whilst studying the Romans. RE promotes spirituality very effectively. This was apparent when older children identified and empathised very closely with Jesus's feelings during the various stations of the cross. One child said that Christ's happy and tearful feeling were like 'when her brother came back from hospital.' The school's Christian values are promoted very well in RE. For instance the Christian values of trust and forgiveness were well understood by younger children studying the leadership qualities of David. The standard of RE has improved significantly since the last inspection due to strong subject leadership and drive to raise standards. However, as yet, limited provision has been made for her to monitor lessons in order to further raise the quality of teaching.

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

The unswerving commitment of the school leadership team for the improvement of the school's distinctive Christian character has been at the heart of the school's success. The school's existing strong Christian ethos has been strengthened by the adoption of new distinctive Christian values which place the love of God and the Christian faith at the centre of school life. Parents say they value the way the school acknowledges the uniqueness of each child as a child of God and enables all to flourish. They feel they are regularly consulted and the school is responsive to their views. The school self-evaluation process as a church school is rigorous involving children, parents, staff and governors in a variety of strategies. However, as yet the school has not updated the form used to record the impact of the school's actions in line with the new evaluation schedule. Links with the diocese are excellent. Staff and governors regularly engage in training opportunities as well as benefitting from the vicar's expertise in church school education. The partnership between the church and school is strong. The Friday school services led by children, staff and the clergy, include local residents and families and successfully unite the two communities in worship. The partnership with the school community in Melanesia, started a few years ago, has a strong impact on all involved. A recent initiative which links the school to a church school in Coventry, serving diverse communities, is exploring what makes both schools distinctively Christian in preparation for the International Cross of Nails award.

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