



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

### **Marchard Bishop Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Church Street  
Morchard Bishop  
Crediton  
Devon  
EX17 6PJ

<b>Diocese:</b>	<b>Exeter</b>
Local authority:	Devon
Date of inspection:	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2013
Date of last inspection:	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2008
School's unique reference number:	113457
Headteacher:	Mr Chris Sargeant
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Daphne Spitzer NS 37

#### **School context**

Morchard Bishop Church of England Primary School serves the villages of Morchard Bishop, Puddington, and Black Dog as well as surrounding areas in this rural location in mid Devon. There are 102 children on roll. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage. The numbers with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities overall is in line with the national average and Pupil Premium is below average. A new head teacher was appointed two years ago.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Morchard Bishop as a Church of England school are good**

Morchard Bishop Church of England Primary School is a Christian community which clearly proclaims its roots in the Christian faith and Christian values. The school is at the heart of the church and local community. This has a very positive impact on the children's academic achievement, personal and spiritual development

#### **Established strengths**

- Harmonious relationships built on the Christian values of friendship, trust and forgiveness
- Good leadership by the headteacher in promoting the school's distinctive Christian character
- Strong partnership between church and school communities promoted by the vicar and school leadership

#### **Focus for development**

- Develop and embed rigorous assessment procedures in religious education which inform planning, teaching and learning and lead to accelerated pupil progress.
- Develop the role of the religious education subject leader so that monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning leads to improvement in performance
- Ensure that the proposed ethos committee, which will include members of the whole school community, establishes procedures which effectively monitor and evaluate the school's distinctive Christian character
- Widen experiences and opportunities for children to develop a personal spirituality and further develop the centrality of prayer in the daily life of the school

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

Morichard Bishop Church School is a welcoming, friendly community where Christian values are recognised, celebrated and established in daily life. These values have a very positive impact on the children's good attendance and academic achievement. The school creates a special, caring, inclusive Christian environment in which all children are cherished and highly valued in line with the core Christian belief that each is created in the image of God. The Christian fellowship which is a developing strength of the school derives from the core Christian belief of the unity of God's love present in the whole school community. Teaching strategies are not only enjoyable and interactive but structured so that children are motivated and learn well. The Christian value of perseverance is well understood by children to be motivating and key to their learning. As one child said when 'you have a hard question in your work you must try and try again'. Children are able to link the values to explicit Bible stories. Relationships at all levels are outstanding because they are built on the Christian value of friendship. Children recognise that the Christian values of forgiveness and trust are inextricably linked to the value of friendship. Spiritual development is promoted very well. For instance, children recognise that the Christian value of creation, in the form of God's created world is present in their beautiful grounds. This belief has been very well promoted by the vicar's recent open air services of blessing for the school's Round House and spiritual garden with its central banner depicting Christian values. Opportunities for spiritual development are promoted well by the school's support for its two main Christian charities, both overseas, which were initiated and supported by members of the school community. This work in China and Africa is also effective in promoting children's understanding and respect for diverse communities. Spirituality is developed by the saying of Grace together, before lunch, in a variety of ways which children find meaningful. The entrance hall features displays which promote the school's distinctive Christian character as well as spiritual reflection very effectively. Children know that prayers placed in the prayer box are included by the vicar in the church's family services emphasising the union of the church and school communities. However during the day there are no times set aside by classes for quiet reflection or prayer or an area inside the school which children can access for this purpose.

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

Collective worship is explicitly Christian and central to daily life at Morichard Bishop. This is because it is an enjoyable and meaningful time of Christian fellowship shared by the school community. Children value the new way of sitting on three sides facing the tall candle which enhances spiritual awareness very effectively. The sense of a loving Christian community is strongly reflected in the older children's comments that they enjoy sitting closer to the younger children so that they are able to look after them. Worship promotes Christian values very effectively relating them clearly to explicit biblical material. This was evident in the collective worship observed when the current theme of perseverance was linked to the enduring love of God. Children's understanding of the church's year is promoted well by the coloured cloth on the focus table, introduced and made by the vicar. As well as the church's seasons, special days, such as Rogation Days are also followed, as observed. The vicar who led worship, ensured that the meaning and relevance was clear for this rural community at the same time, linking the theme to stewardship of God's creation. Although the candle lit during worship is understood to represent the light of Christ, children are developing an understanding of the Trinity from the use of the blessing given regularly to the school community by the vicar in worship. Clergy from the Methodist church as well laity from both churches in the village contribute very effectively to school worship and enhance the input of the church community to school life. Most Christian festivals are celebrated either in the church or school and sometimes in the school grounds as is planned for the forthcoming Ascension Day service in order to maximise opportunities for developing spiritual awareness. The special service on Ash Wednesday was memorably uplifting and had a significant impact. Children lead worship on a regular basis, either in groups in turn, for Key Stage 2 worship or as a class with parents present. Planning for worship is led by the headteacher and vicar working in close partnership. Staff and children are also involved. Governors are

very supportive and effective in monitoring this aspect of school life.

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

Standards in religious education (RE) at Morchard Bishop are satisfactory. They are lower than in other core subjects. Children make good progress between the key stages. Having started in the early years with skills and abilities which are usually below national expectations, pupil attainment is in line with the national average when they leave at Year 6. Progress between the key stages is good because the quality of teaching overall is good. However assessment procedures although in place, do not accurately inform planning and learning. Learning is not yet formally tracked in the same way as the other core subjects in order to maximise individual children's progress. Children enjoy RE lessons because they say they are 'fun'. In both lessons observed, methods used were interactive, clearly engaging and relevant. Children demonstrated a good knowledge of key aspects of Christianity, reflecting the school's distinctive Christian character very effectively. This was evident in a lesson observed in an older class where children were learning about the qualities of God. An understanding of the Trinity was well explained and the Bible used very effectively in a challenging yet exciting activity to promote learning. RE promotes the school's distinctive Christian values very well. This was reflected in a lesson held on the school field with younger children, on the subject of the value of creation. Children clearly understood that God's creation was all around them, as noted in a child's comment that 'we're sitting on it!' RE contributes very effectively to spiritual development. This was noted in the gasps of awe and wonder from the children when a huge poster made previously by them was unrolled displaying their depiction of the Christian Creation story. Art, music and dance was used to good effect in the other class to express children's feelings about God and their own creativity. The quality of spirituality expressed is seen through comments expressed such as a child's comment that the dance of her group was to show that 'God always forgives us'. Children enjoy learning about other faiths as well as Christianity and a recent themed day on India has had a good impact. Currently a new subject leader has yet to be appointed. The school leadership are aware that this is a priority and are taking steps to address this issue.

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

The new headteacher's Christian vision and his commitment to this vision are the driving force at the heart of the school's success and ongoing improvement as a church school. The vicar and governing body have made a significant contribution to this and ensured that this vision is shared and understood by the school community. The vision is founded on a belief that the school is central to the church's role in serving the needs of the children and the local community. The evident strength of the partnership between the church and school are testament to the success of this strategy over the last two years. A recent initiative introduced by the headteacher, called the welcome service and led by the vicar, is now held at the start of each school year, to welcome the new intake of children, staff and others who have joined the school. It is a good example of the growing union between the church and school. Governors demonstrate a good understanding of the part the school's distinctive Christian character plays in promoting learners' achievement. The school's self- evaluation process as a church school is good and issues raised by the leadership for development are accurately identified. The recent work on developing the school's Christian values, have enabled staff to acquire a good understanding of how Christian ethos and belief provides the basis for the values which are integral to the daily of the school. This work brought together staff, governors, parents and members of the local church communities and symbolised a developing Christian fellowship in action. Parents feel very welcomed and involved in the life of the school and their views are invited regularly to proposed initiatives as well as to the church school self- evaluation process. They know their suggestions are valued such as through the formation of the weekly parents prayer group. The headteacher now plans to further enhance this self- evaluation process by the implementation of an ethos committee composed of representatives of the school, church and local communities; governors, clergy and laity as well as parents, children and staff. Relations with the diocese are good; recent support from the diocese has been effective and is valued by the school. Partnerships with Christian charities overseas are good and are mutually beneficial.

