

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Stockland Church of England Academy

Stockland
Honiton
Devon
EX14 9EF

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon
Date of inspection: 7th December 2012
Date of last inspection: not previously inspected as an academy
School's unique reference number: 137454
Principal: Mr Steve Clarke
Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Stockland is a smaller than the average size primary school with 105 children on roll. Children are arranged into four class groups. The majority of children are of white British origin. A significant number of children come from outside the immediate village. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school converted to academy status in September 2011.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stockland as a Church of England school are good

The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection in embedding a clear set of core values underpinned by Christian teaching delivered through acts of worship that are a distinct time in the school day. The impact of these values is clearly evident in the school's approach to learning, with its emphasis on mixed ability group work, and the extent to which this develops in the children a heightened sense of awareness of the needs of each other.

Established strengths

- The quality of the opportunities for children to develop a moral and social understanding based on Christian values.
- The quality of relationships between all members of the school community based on the school's values led Christian ethos which creates a positive learning environment.
- The quality of understanding of the principal and directors of the purpose and meaning of being a church academy and the clarity of understanding on how to move forward..

Focus for development

- Ensure that quality opportunities to explore a personal spirituality permeate all aspects of school life beyond collective worship.
- Develop a greater focus to collective worship themes and involve children more in exploring them.
- Develop the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship and the school's values through meetings with children.

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

The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection in embedding an explicit set of Christian values at the heart of the school. Through the mnemonic 'TRUST', representing trust, reflection, understanding, serving and talent, all members of the school community clearly articulate these key values that lie at the centre of the school's ethos and have an excellent understanding of how they make an impact on the children's learning and their personal development. The underpinning of the Christian nature of these five values

through explicit teaching of Bible stories in collective worship means that children are able to relate a Christian understanding of these values to their own learning. This is particularly evident in the strong emphasis on group work which characterises the school's approach to learning and which creates an environment which very successfully encourages the moral and social development of the children. This was seen in lessons observed during the inspection where teachers placed a substantial amount of trust in children to manage their own learning and in which children placed trust in each other to facilitate their own learning. Children clearly enjoy this approach and are highly motivated and engaged in their learning and show great enthusiasm in their responses. The 'TRUST' theme works successfully at a spiritual level as well with children having good opportunities to reflect on and understand their work. There are some other opportunities for children to reflect in the school day. The school needs to take this further by developing a more coherent understanding of spirituality across the school community and use this to add greater depth to the quality of the children's reflections across the whole curriculum. The notion of service is a strength of the school with children taking responsibility for aspects of life in school such as prefects to monitor playtimes. Children are also involved in charitable work both nationally and abroad and have a good understanding of social justice. Children have very positive attitudes towards their learning and their behaviour is excellent. They say that they make good friends with other children of any age and that they know that teachers care for them and will help them.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important time in the school day and one that children are positive about. There is a clear distinction between acts of worship and assembly at Stockland. This is an improvement and, by achieving this, the school has addressed the area for development from the previous inspection. The school has worked hard to create a special worship space by using a table, candles and a focal display to turn one of the classrooms, each day, into the worship hall. The school is assiduous in the lighting of the candle to mark the start of a distinct time for worship. Children understand this and say that this is one of the ways through which they express their status as a church school. The use of the 'Values for Life' material, based on explicit Christian values, gives a firm framework through which all teachers in the school confidently lead a weekly act of worship. The collective worship coordinator ensures that teachers meet each term to discuss how they will approach each weekly theme so that there is no repetition of content. The regular references from Bible stories to the school's 'TRUST' values helps to reinforce for children the link between work in classroom and what they learn in worship. There needs to be a clearer focus on a deeper meaning to the themes and the school should explore how to involve children to a greater extent in discussing how the concepts they hear about in worship impact on their own lives and the lives of others. Children have a very good understanding of prayer and, by the time they leave the school in Year 6, show a marked degree of maturity in the way that they articulate their thoughts and opinions on matters of faith and belief. The local church, and other nearby churches, is an integral part of the life of the school. Children regard them as part of being a church school. The children have a good understanding of major Christian festivals and look forward to the times when they are celebrated in the church. Their commitment to the church is reflected in the large number of children who are due to attend the forthcoming Christingle service. There are some informal systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship and this is something that needs to be developed.

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

The school has been successful in addressing the areas for development from the previous report and has made very good progress in developing a distinct church school ethos that makes a difference to the lives of all those in the school community. The headteacher is passionate about exploring the distinct ethos so that it adds depth to the children's education experience both academically and personally. He has a very good understanding of the links between the school's core values and work in the classroom and is keen to explore, with the school community, a wider interpretation of how spirituality can further enhance the quality of education. He is very ably supported by the coordinator for religious education, who is also passionate about the place of collective worship and ensures that both have a high profile within the whole curriculum and life of the school. Governors fully support the school's Christian character and have a good understanding of the core values and the impact they have on the children's learning and personal development. For example, they clearly

articulate how the 'TRUST' values are evident in the school's emphasis on mixed ability group work. The appointment of a further foundation governor to the governing body since becoming an academy is a reflection of the school's commitment to its church school status. There are some systems for the leadership and management, including governors, to monitor and evaluate the impact of the Christian character but these are not yet robust. The vicar and other local clergy are well known members of the school community. They particularly appreciate the warmth of the welcome they receive and the response from children when they lead acts of worship. Parents appreciate the school's encouragement of their children to ask questions about matters of faith and belief. They are particularly pleased that their children do this with confidence and from an informed position in which they do not make judgements but an acceptance of all faiths and those who have none. When asked about their children's enjoyment of school and their academic and personal progress, parents were unanimous in referring it back to one factor: the impact of 'TRUST'.

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