



Shalfleet Church of England Primary School

Station Road
Ningwood
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 4NN

Diocese:	Portsmouth
Local authority:	Isle of Wight
Dates of inspection:	6 October 2010
Date of last inspection:	18 June 2007
School's unique reference number:	118188
Headteacher:	Mrs Lisa Nicolson
Inspector's name and number:	Mr Andrew Rickett, 201

School context

Shalfleet is a smaller than average primary school with 121 children who mainly come from the surrounding area. The majority of children are from a white British heritage and come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than the national average. The current headteacher was appointed in October 2009. Since September 2010 the school has been in a hard federation with another local school with children entering Year 5 for the first time.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shalfleet Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Shalfleet is a place that makes its Christian character accessible to all members of the school community. The distinct emphasis on God's love and care for every child has created an environment in which children are nurtured and readily encouraged to develop their personal spirituality and this makes a significant contribution to their personal growth and their approach to learning.

Established strengths

- The natural way that children share their views and opinions about matters of faith and belief.
- The high quality of relationships based on love, forgiveness and trust.
- The quality of the self-evaluation process led by the leadership team.

Focus for development

- Monitor the quality of the opportunities for children to develop their spirituality.
- Governors to lead the evaluation of the impact of the opportunities provided by the school for the spiritual development of pupils.
- Develop further the schools self evaluation process through regular monitoring.

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

The impact of Christian distinctiveness has developed considerably since the previous inspection. Outstanding progress has been made in developing the school's Christian vision especially in the way that the concepts of faith and belief have become more real and relevant to the children. The school's Christian character is promoted with energy by school leaders through a strong mission statement that places God's love at the centre of the school's vision which is also supported through acts of worship. The Christian character is evident in the everyday life of the school through very high quality relationships based on Christian interpretation of love, forgiveness and trust. These values are apparent clearly amongst children and adults. For example, it is seen in lessons, where children feel very comfortable to talk openly about matters of faith and belief and to share their ideas and opinions in an atmosphere where they know that their views will be listened to with respect. In both religious education lessons observed, children were encouraged to be reflective. In a Year 5 class, children were inquisitive and searching in their questioning about different interpretations of Creation. In a Year 2 class, children were encouraged to explore the nature of God. When asked, 'Who is God?' one child explained that 'He is a spirit' to which another child answered, praising their reply, saying, 'That's a good one!' Children have many opportunities to be reflective and to develop a personal spirituality. They articulate their thoughts very well and take time to make sure that their replies are considered. The impact of these opportunities is not formally monitored. Children have very positive attitudes towards the school and their learning. They say that they feel very safe and know that adults are there to care for them. Children take their responsibilities seriously within the running of the school, especially their charitable work.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Acts of worship are special and at distinct times in the school day. Collective worship is a time when the school community comes together to think explicitly about God and to reflect on His Creation and the messages that the Bible teaches us about how we can lead our lives. When asked what makes this a church school, children agree immediately that it is the everyday prayers to God in collective worship that are important to them. Parents reinforce this view when they say that they are impressed by the 'distinct elements' of worship that create times that are 'quite magical'. Collective worship is very thoroughly planned on a weekly basis with a clear focus that have clear references to Bible stories and prayers that are relevant to that message. Worship themes strongly reflect the school's vision and are an important time to help children learn about faith and belief. When talking with children, they clearly understand that not all children in the school have belief or faith, but that the messages they hear are still important. As one child said, 'everyone is different and has different opinions. You don't have to fight over it.' A particularly strong part of worship is the opportunity for children to say extemporaneous prayers. When asked to do this, children of all ages happily volunteer and say prayers that reflect the worship themes or just speak to God with what is on their mind. It is a very special moment in the school day. The celebration of major Christian festivals, either at the parish church or in school, is important to the children, they speak of them as being markers in the school year to denote special times for Christians. Acts of worship make a very good contribution to the children's spiritual development. There are specific opportunities to be still and be quiet in order to reflect and children respond to these positively. Surveys of children's views on worship have given them the opportunity to say what they prefer and what could be better. The school has responded to these suggestions and this has helped to raise the quality of acts of worship. The use of opening responses, the lighting of a candle with a candle prayer, visual images and displays, confident singing and a clear emphasis on Anglican tradition all help to make worship at this school a very unique time.

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

The unassuming and reflective approach of the headteacher is significant in making the school's Christian character accessible and meaningful to all. The way in which the school community interprets its Christian ethos is making it more relevant to the lives of the children. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the purpose of being a church school and her vision is one that is shared and clearly understood by the whole school community. For example, parents speak of the 'very genuine, very humble and deep compassion for each other' that adults and children alike show. The headteacher's commitment and passion is shared by the governing body which has an excellent grasp of the self-evaluation process and an accurate understanding of how to continue to develop as a church school. The very recent hard federation is being seen as an opportunity for the school to develop and grow. The willingness to develop and the commitment of the school's leaders and managers mean that there is a very great capacity to continue this growth. The establishment of a church school group including senior leaders and governors has been instrumental in putting in place a procedure that successfully monitors and evaluates the impact of the school's Christian ethos. The group's regular meetings, all supported with careful minutes, focus on the impact of the Christian ethos on the lives of the children. It identifies areas for development and ensures that appropriate action is taken. Governors are keen to see the group develop further as it explores how children can be more directly included in the self-evaluation process particularly with regard to the children's spiritual development. Links with the parish church are very close and the vicar is an important part of the life of the school through membership of the governing body and the church school group as well as regularly leading acts of worship. He is a well-known figure in the life of the school and children agree that his acts of worship are 'great fun'. The coordinator for religious education (RE) is very committed to her subject and ensures that RE is an important part of the school curriculum. She has a very good understanding of the contribution that RE can make to the children's personal development and in promoting their own spirituality. The school takes seriously the need to develop the children's understanding and appreciation of the diversity of faith and culture in the UK and around the world. Parents strongly feel that the way that the school approaches its Christian character is one that they wholeheartedly support. They comment that the school has 'made faith real and acceptable' for their children and agree that 'faith is never boring in our school'.