



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



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

### Exford Church of England First School

**Exford  
Minehead  
TA24 7PP**

**Previous SIAMS grade:** **Good**

**Current inspection grade:** **Good**

**Diocese:** **Bath and Wells**

**Local authority:** **Somerset**

**Date of inspection:** **9th July 2015**

**Date of last inspection:** **12th July 2010**

**School's unique ref. no.** **123756**

**Headteacher:** **Jeremy Weedon**

**Inspector's name and no.** **Ann Gibbs 786**

### School context

Exford Church of England First School is a village school with 32 pupils on roll who are taught in two mixed age classes. Almost all the pupils are of White British background. The school is part of a federation of three schools and governance is currently in the charge of an Interim Executive Board. There is an Executive head teacher, but the school is run on a day to day basis by the Head of Teaching and Learning. The school serves a wide rural community.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Exford First School as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian values promoted are evident in all aspects of the school's life and are well understood by pupils
- Excellent provision is made to support the needs of all pupils in a caring and nurturing environment
- Strong leadership is provided by the Head of Teaching and Learning and the Executive head teacher in promoting the Christian vision of the school
- Relationships with the local church and community are strong and positive

### **Areas to improve**

- Establish a robust monitoring system with the new governing body to ensure that there is sufficient support and challenge for the school, as a church school
- Further embed the school's chosen Christian values to ensure that they are fully understood by all stakeholders
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness, across the life of the school and the curriculum
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### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

Exford is a school where pupils are well cared for and where they show great care for one another, living out the school's Christian values. They are proud of their school and speak enthusiastically about how much they enjoy their learning experiences. Pupils have a very good understanding of the values being promoted by the school and are keen to explain how these have an impact on their daily lives. One pupil said that Peace, the value explored most recently, is really important; "It is not just about being quiet but it is also when you feel happy inside and your friends are okay too." Pupils take responsibility for one another and are quick to point out times when they can show concern for the needs of others. Staff have extensive knowledge of every pupil as an individual and can put appropriate interventions and support in place where needed. Strong relationships have been built with pupils' families. This means that parents feel well supported and they praise the ethos of the school. They feel lucky that their children are pupils at Exford and expressed their belief that all pupils are supported and challenged to achieve to the best of their ability. Parents spoke of the way in which pupils talk about the values they have learned and how they have been able to relate these to Biblical teaching. Relationships with the local community are strong. The pupils regularly visit the local church and the Rector is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. As a result of these close links parents feel that they are known in the church and are always made to feel welcome. Opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness are being established effectively through adaptions to the curriculum and particularly the RE syllabus which is now directly linked to the school's Christian values. Recently this has included work on special places, beautifully displayed in the infant classroom. Staff have also ensured that pupils have opportunities to explore cultural diversity and their responses to this are clear in their comments, their books and classroom displays. The staff are keen to develop these areas further, to give further opportunities to prepare children for life in modern Britain.

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

Collective worship plays a central part in the daily life of the school and is seen as an important time for affirming the school's values and developing a sense of community. Themes for collective worship are linked to the school's Christian values effectively, one value being explored in each half term. A table covered with the appropriate liturgical colour gives pupils an understanding of some Anglican practice and provides a focal point for worship. Pupils are able to explain why these colours are important and, in simple terms, what they mean symbolically. Older pupils take responsibility for the music, lighting the candle and introducing the responses at the start of worship and clearly take pride in this role, which gives them some understanding of the important aspects of worship. Pupils are fully engaged in acts of worship and join in enthusiastically with songs and prayers. They know the Lord's Prayer, and show understanding of the role of prayer in worship. They contribute their own prayers and have led these at special services. Pupils are able to recall stories and lessons learned from previous worship and understand how these can be applied to their own lives. A recent visitor talked about helping others through the work of the Food Cupboard and in response every child contributed to a food box which the school donated to the charity. This is an example of how school worship encourages action in the community. Pupils and staff contribute to the evaluation of collective worship and there is clear evidence in the documentation that such evaluations are used to inform future planning. As yet pupils have few opportunities to be involved in planning collective worship but there is scope for them to do this. Ideas about the Christian concept of the Trinity have been introduced and can be explored further with the support of local clergy. Worship is linked to the main Christian festivals which are often held in church. Pupils have also contributed to community events such as the Remembrance Day service. Their involvement is much appreciated and there are comments from members of the local community in the school's self evaluation about the respectful way in which pupils take part.

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

The Head of Teaching and Learning provides strong and effective leadership, supported by the Executive head teacher of the federation. This strong leadership has played a significant part in promoting the school's Christian vision and is recognised by staff, parents and representatives of the local community. Staff feel cared for and well supported by the Head of Teaching and Learning and Head teacher. Opportunities are found for staff to have relevant training linked to the school's development plan. Recently this has included diocesan training for the RE Co-ordinator and this training is already having an impact on the delivery of RE within the school. Further opportunities are being sought, including training to support staff aspiring to leadership in church schools. Currently the school has an interim executive board providing governance, put in place by the local authority. It has recently been decided that a full governing body should be reconvened. Once in place these governors will have an important role to play in supporting the school's leadership and providing challenge to ensure that the school continues to develop as a good church school. Together with the staff they need to promote the school's church status further. Parents recognise the hard work and commitment of the leadership and staff. They commented that "Nothing is too much trouble, staff here always go the extra mile". This commitment was also remarked on by the Rector of the local church who sees the school as an important part of community life. Links with the church are strong and appreciated by all stakeholders. The Rector and a member of the church run one of the after school clubs which gives pupils further opportunities to explore Christian beliefs and traditions. Pupils benefit greatly from the close working relationships established by the current leadership with all stakeholders. Most issues from the previous inspection have been addressed and statutory obligations are fully met.