



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

Barcombe CE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Path

Barcombe Cross

Lewes

East Sussex

BN8 5DN

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** Chichester

Local authority: East Sussex

Dates of inspection: 10 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 7 and 8 December 2009

School's unique reference number: 114488

Headteacher: Stewart James

Inspector's name and number: Rosemary Appleby 749

### School context

Barcombe CE Primary School is smaller than the average size primary school in a rural setting with 133 pupils on roll. There are five classes with two year groups taught in each class. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is above national average. Most pupils come from a white British heritage. There has been a significant building programme since the previous inspection. Barcombe were judged as Outstanding in their Ofsted Inspection of June 2015.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barcombe as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values have a significant influence on pupils' daily lives resulting in exemplary behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and high levels of attainment.
- Effective links with the local church and the community are supportive and ensure that the school is seen as central to Barcombe village life.
- The passionate and purposeful leadership of the headteacher and governors inspires all stakeholders to live out and promote Christian distinctiveness.
- The inclusivity of the school encourages, nurtures and challenges all pupils.

### Areas to improve

- For all groups in the school community to develop the range and focus of their strategic involvement in formally monitoring and evaluating the Christian distinctiveness of the school so that all contributions have maximum impact on the continual improvement of Barcombe.
- To develop the outside environment so that it reflects the rich explicit Christian symbolism evident inside the school.

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

The Christian ethos at Barcombe is underpinned by twelve Christian values chosen by the school community and developed over three years. These values are prominently displayed in the school entrance and reinforce that this school actively lives out its mission statement of 'Learning together, believing together'. Christian values are consistently understood and clearly articulated by all members of the school community. This excellent shared ownership has enabled the school to effectively integrate these values into the life of the school so that they impact on pupil's wellbeing and learning. Learners say that these values 'help you to make the right decisions in the rest of your life' and 'make me and everyone else kinder'. Parents, pupils, staff and governors clearly articulated the Christian value of courage, demonstrating a strength and consistency of understanding across the school community. This was reinforced through stunning displays about courage alongside relevant biblical quotations from Proverbs Joshua and Corinthians. Discussion in collective worship about the courage of Jesus during Lent was reinforced in religious education (RE) lessons and resulted in a powerful collective understanding. The Christian character contributes significantly to pupil achievement, which current data indicates is above national average. Pupils thrive because they are confident of being valued. The Christian character is also evident in the excellent inclusive and caring relationships across the school community and the exemplary behaviour. The RE leader is knowledgeable and experienced in supporting staff to deliver high quality RE across the school. RE excellently supports the Christian character of the school and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth. In the RE lessons observed, pupils' secure knowledge of Christianity enabled them to make comparisons with Islam and an understanding of prayer led pupils to know that you can pray anywhere as Christians and that it helps you become closer to God. Links with a school in Africa ensure that pupils have respect for diversity in the world and an understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith. Respect for others is strengthened through each class choosing a charity to sponsor over the academic year and organising their own fundraising. Pupils clearly linked these initiatives to the school's Christian value of generosity. The outside environment does not yet provide any explicit areas to reinforce the strong Christian symbolism that is evident inside the school buildings.

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

Collective worship is a special and distinct time in the school day. Pupils say that they value this time where they learn about bible stories that make them feel safe because they know God will help them. Pupils are actively engaged, respectful and participate in worship through singing, reflection time, reading bible stories, reading prayers and praying. Aspects of Anglican worship, such as reciting the Lord's Prayer, the prayer of St Richard and the prayer of St Francis of Assisi are well established and pupils can clearly relate bible stories to their own lives. One pupil recounted that the story of King Solomon 'taught me to make the right choices' in life. The services at St Mary's parish church celebrating Harvest, Easter and Christmas appropriately extend the opportunity for worship and are extremely well attended by parents. The vicar and curate regularly lead worship at the school and are known well by the school community. Pupils state that the vicar is important because Barcombe is a Church of England School and he can teach them how to pray to God and teach them stories from the bible. Clergy and the church community have a high profile in the school, leading both Y Club, collective worship and taking an active part in events such as making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. Collective worship is not yet outstanding as the planning and evaluation of worship does not consistently involve all stakeholders. Although there are opportunities for informal feedback about the process and impact of worship, school leaders do not formally report on worship and therefore evaluation of worship is not yet embedded in the school's cycle of improvement. Pupils are beginning to plan, lead and evaluate worship and are growing in their evaluative skills. The person of Jesus Christ is evident in collective worship. Pupils have opportunities to develop their understanding of the Trinity and pupils talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit with a growing appreciation. Prayer has a high profile in the school. Pupils write their own thoughtful prayers for inclusion in a class prayer book and these

are often displayed around the school. Prayers are said before lunch and at the end of the day reinforcing the importance of prayer.

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

The headteacher, staff team and governing body clearly articulate a strong understanding of how the Christian vision gives direction to the whole school community. They are passionate about serving the needs of the school and have been proactive in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection. Reflection areas in each class now promote deep thinking, reflection and challenge on a wide variety of themes such as St Francis, Islam, Lent and encourage them to ask challenging questions about God and creation. These reflection areas are highly effective in embedding Christian distinctiveness. The current school development plan includes explicit action points linked to Christian distinctiveness, worship and RE. These action plans reflect the commitment of leaders continually to improve Christian distinctiveness. Governors are committed to the Christian ethos of the school and support the school very well. They make many visits to school enabling them to know the school well. A particular strength is governor interviews with pupils to gather their views first-hand regarding RE. During staff interviews candidates are asked about their reasons for wanting to be part of Barcombe and this ensure that the school appoints staff committed to promoting the Christian ethos. Links with the local church community are strong and supportive. One example of this is the well attended 'Y' Club led by the vicar and curate where pupils discuss their own beliefs and questions about faith. Parents' and pupils' attendance at church services, celebrating major Christian festivals, brings an understanding of Anglican life to the school community. Staff are well supported in their professional development through use of Diocesan training and this effectively increases their skills and knowledge to develop the school as a church school. The headteacher has attended training related to self-evaluation in a church school and the governors recently had the assistant director of education for the Diocese to talk to them about the way forward for Church Schools. Parents speak passionately about the school. They highly value the caring inclusive Christian ethos that permeates the school where governors are 'ambitious for children and staff' and where the headteacher unreservedly lives out the Christian ethos of the school. They value the family ethos of the school where pupils take on responsibility for helping each other as peer mediators and The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

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