



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



 The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Old Neighbourhood
Chalford, Stroud
Gloucester GL6 8PP

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucester

Date of inspection: 24 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 27 June 2011

School's unique reference number: 115677

Acting headteacher: Andrew Webber

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Christ Church is a smaller than average size primary school with 35 children arranged into two class groups. Children come from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds and the majority are from a white British heritage. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the number receiving pupil premium support. Attendance is above the national average. There is limited outside space. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an acting headteacher appointed in September 2015.

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

- The Christian mission is at the heart of the school's ethos and underpins relationships throughout the school community.
- Acts of worship are important times in the school day and make a difference to the children's understanding of how Bible stories underpin Christian values.
- The commitment of the acting headteacher, together with other school leaders and governors, to bring meaning and purpose to the impact of the school's distinctive Christian ethos means that it is continually moving forward as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Involve children in the development of closer links between the school motto and its new core Christian values so that there is a deeper understanding of how the Christian ethos informs our everyday lives.
- Improve the quality of opportunities for children to explore their personal spiritual awareness by developing the use of different types of questioning that are explored in religious education (RE) and other areas of school life.

- Develop the role of children in leading acts of worship by giving them greater ownership of how worship themes are explored.

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

Christian values are well established in the life of the school and provide the basis of planning for collective worship. They make an impact on the life of the school because they are used to help children develop their relationships and learn how to behave well to each other. Children have a good understanding of this. The school has been exploring how to identify a core set of values from those used in worship and, following quite a lot of discussion, have settled on friendship, truthfulness, respect and justice. They are at an early stage of being explored and links to the school motto: love, live, learn and laugh, are not yet clear. However, school leaders have a good understanding of how to develop these links and further connect them to seven character statements that are also a well-established part of the life of the school. The values are also used to a greater extent in lessons where they are making more of a contribution to the children's learning. For example, RE lessons refer to values to help children have empathy with who they are learning about. The school is developing its understanding of spirituality and how to identify opportunities to promote its exploration in the school day. Members of staff have begun to track these opportunities and to encourage questions that help children reflect on a deeper meaning to these experiences. The work done so far is exciting and is beginning to impact in the classroom. The potential for this has not been fully developed and children have yet to acquire strategies to support them in thinking through their thoughts and ideas in depth. Children talk with confidence and openness about matters of faith and belief and listen to the views of others. They know that the opinions of others should be treated with respect and that other cultures, traditions and religions should be valued. They have a secure grasp of right from wrong and enjoy discussing moral dilemmas that have no clear answer.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of worship are good because they are one of the main ways through which the school promotes explicit Christian values in which Bible stories are specifically related to the everyday lives of children. Planning for worship themes focusses on twelve values which are delivered in a programme that allows for them to be explored. Children are able to explain how Bible stories, such as the 'Good Samaritan', show friendship and that they can follow that example in their own lives. The recognition of how children have done this with the giving of 'Shine' awards, where children nominate each other, helps to raise the profile of values and gives children the opportunity to think of others before themselves. Children respond well in worship and are keen to answer questions and take part. They have some opportunities to plan and lead worship and contribute to its evaluation through written feedback and discussion. The role of the Values Ambassadors in leading this is central. There are fewer times when all children lead worship and have an involvement in how themes are explored over the course of the week. The use of simple words of welcome and the lighting of three candles to mark the beginning of worship establish that this is a special and distinct time in the school day. Children appreciate this and say that worship is part of being a church school. They know that the candles represent the Trinity three 'somehow all being one'. They explain that God, as Father created the world and sent His Son to be with us and teach us how to be 'kind'. Some of the older children explain how the Holy Spirit 'protects us' but are not able to explain how or why this happens. There are good opportunities for children to pray in the school day and they respond with respect to those times. They understand that prayer is a way of talking to God and, following some teaching in worship, know that there are different types of prayers for different occasions.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

Standards in RE are in line with national expectations for the majority of children and they make good progress throughout the school. Children have a secure knowledge of RE and are able to apply this to learn from what they have learnt. They also make links between different

aspects of their learning. For example, even the youngest children make connections between Christianity and Judaism by identifying similarities between a church and a synagogue. Older children likewise use prior learning to enhance the subject being studied. In particular, teachers and children are beginning to refer to the four core Christian values to help them understand. For example, Year 3 and 4 children used the concept of justice to explain the unfairness of discrimination while responding to the speeches of Martin Luther King. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of RE and ensure that lessons have a balance between this and providing opportunities for children to explore religious concepts. At times, there is too much emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and the potential for children to make significant progress isn't always fully realised as opportunities to enhance their learning through the use of deep questioning are missed. However, when children are challenged in their thinking they respond with enthusiasm and some insightful comments. For example, younger children explained how 'love spreads if you share it' as long as 'you make yourself happy – and you are the only person who can do that'. The acting headteacher is the RE leader and he has a very good understanding of the latest development in the subject. He has carried out some very effective evaluations from analysis of children's work which has identified areas to improve such as consistency across the class groups. In particular he has a very good strategic grasp of how to develop assessment in response to the recent developments in the national curriculum. As these developments are recent, there is not sufficient assessment evidence at the moment to track children's progress across the school. Religious education makes a good contribution to the children's growing awareness of other cultures and religions around the world and in modern Britain. Children say that this is an aspect of RE that they enjoy. Similarly, RE makes a valuable contribution to the development of the children's understanding that its core values are rooted in Bible teaching.

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

The acting headteacher has made an excellent impact on the development of the school's Christian ethos. He has worked tirelessly to develop his understanding of what it means to be a church school and is quickly learning how to move forward as a church school. Along with other members of staff and the whole school community, he has explored how to bring greater clarity to the Christian ethos. He has a good understanding of how this process can continue to develop by creating stronger links between the school's motto, its recently identified four Christian values and the seven character traits that support them. This has put the school's leaders and managers in a good position to build on its current understanding. The acting headteacher has ensured that good quality monitoring has been undertaken of collective worship and RE that has been evaluated and identified areas to improve. Some of these are at an early stage. For example, the development of the 'spirituality tracker' has enhanced the understanding of what spirituality means to members of staff which has given them the ability to more accurately identify opportunities in the wider curriculum. The impact of this work is at a relatively early stage. However, the work being done to develop the Christian ethos is highly commendable. This is particularly so because school leaders and managers are gaining confidence to explore their own interpretation of what it means to them to be a church school. Governors fully support this development and share the acting headteacher's enthusiasm and willingness to move forward. The role of local clergy makes an important contribution to the school's growing Christian ethos. They support the school through their work with the governing body and leading acts of worship. Moreover, they offer support by providing practical advice and ideas to develop aspects of church school ethos such as prayer. Parents feel strongly that the school gives their children many opportunities to explore their views and thoughts about matters of faith and belief both in school and at home. They say that their children bring home questions from school which they discuss avidly. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.