

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Heddington Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Road

Heddington

Calne

Wiltshire

SN11 0PJ

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: 17th May 2016

Date of last inspection: 4th April 2011

School's unique reference number: 126327

Headteacher: Ashley Martin

Inspector's name and number: David Hatrey 844

School context

Heddington Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a small rural school with 69 children on roll. The numbers who receive pupil premium funding and those who have English as an additional language is below national averages. The number of children who have special educational needs is also below those nationally. The majority of children are from a white British background.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Heddington Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- A warm and caring Christian ethos has been created where good relationships between all members of the school are attributed to Christian values.
- Children have a good understanding of most of the core Christian values and articulate how these have influenced their choices.
- The headteacher's enthusiastic and dedicated leadership has created a church school whose ethos is based upon distinct Christian values.
- The church makes a strong contribution to the life of the school enabling children to understand that they are special to God.

Areas to improve

- Establish an agreed definition of spirituality with planned high quality experiences through which children express their ideas in a variety of innovative ways.
- Build upon existing monitoring practice so that all aspects of the work of a church school are evaluated and lead to ongoing improvements.
- Involve children to a greater extent in planning and leading collective worship so they develop ownership of how worship themes are relevant to their needs.

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

The headteacher has involved the school community in reviewing the school aims. The school has identified a number of distinct Christian values which are placed at the heart of its life and work. Exploring an understanding of these values is one of the aims of the school. They include friendship, humility, justice, hope, compassion, generosity and courage. They have a high profile around the school and are effectively woven into learning. Children now have a real ownership of these values, including being inspired by Jesus and recognising that they are made in God's image. Children have a good understanding of most of the core values, although some, such as compassion are not secure. Children articulate how Christian values influence their lives and choices with confidence and recognise that they create a caring family ethos where all are valued. Links between values and Jesus' teaching are clearly understood as they refer them to Jesus' parables or actions. One child explained that 'God had the idea for these values and he gave them to Jesus to tell us'. Values are strongly reflected in the good quality of relationships which children form. They have a growing understanding of what this means as they form beliefs, appreciating they are all special to God. Care shown by older children to others is a strong feature of the school and staff model how relationships help children to respect one another. Parents appreciate how well staff know their children and the time they give to them. Bullying and name calling are rare and, where incidents happen, are swiftly dealt with in a sensitive manner. Children have the confidence to share ideas openly because they know these will be valued. Restorative justice, a new initiative, enriches children's awareness of how their actions affect others and how to make amends. Provision for spirituality has been enhanced by giving dedicated time to reflect on values and the recently introduced reflection diaries are helping children to record their ideas with a deepening clarity and depth of thought. However, there is no agreed definition of spirituality from which all staff work, neither are opportunities identified across the curriculum to provide a breadth of experiences. Children have a growing understanding of world faiths, supported by the introduction of Discovery RE. Thoughtful comparisons between the traditions and beliefs of different faiths and their own enhance their understanding. Support for a Bangladesh child and the vicar's links with churches in Tanzania have extended the children's knowledge of how Christians express their faith in different ways and how cultures vary. Children show an interest in these religions showing tolerance and respect for those who have different beliefs.

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

Collective worship has a central role in the life of the school and is seen as a special occasion for all to share with God. Thoughtful planning provides opportunities for children to experience different styles of worship and become involved which helps them to remember the messages. Some particularly enjoy drama from the Open the Book team. Children have a good knowledge of Jesus' teaching and Christian festivals. For example, Holy Week celebrations come alive when they wave palms following a donkey, leading into a simple shared meal, reminding them of Maundy Thursday. They think of the sadness of Good Friday before celebrating Jesus' resurrection. These experiences are vividly recalled. Children recognise that messages given through worship come from Jesus' teaching and how He would want us to live. Children are aware that they can use these messages, showing how to respond to different situations. Understanding of the Christian values is deepened as children consider their relevance for daily life. They talk thoughtfully about the work of the Holy Spirit and have a growing understanding of the Trinity. Prayer is understood as a way of sharing their thoughts with God. Younger children confidently write simple thank you prayers, whilst older children seek blessings for others. Children compose spontaneous prayers in worship. They express ideas in prayers which can be placed into prayer boxes. These are shared in worship and help children understand the relevance of prayer in their daily lives. Some evaluation of worship is undertaken but has not been sufficiently robust to identify ongoing improvements. Children are not involved in this.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Attainment in religious education (RE) at the end of Years 2 and 6 is at least good with a significant number of children achieving higher levels. This compares well with other core subjects. Teaching is generally good and sometimes outstanding when children have opportunities to respond in creative ways. Targets for raising the quality of teaching are identified from observations and effectively extend children's learning. A good example of this is the use of questions that challenge children's thinking to enable them to make connections in their learning. The school is refining its assessment strategies to respond to the latest initiatives in RE by moderating the accuracy of its judgements. There is a good balance of learning about religion and learning from their studies which enables children to relate RE to their daily lives. Children are engaged in their learning and are eager to answer. The school's self-evaluation had identified that children's knowledge of world faiths was limited. Adopting a new scheme of work, Discovery RE and focused teaching, has effectively addressed this. The new scheme is still being embedded so the full impact has yet to be realised. There are good opportunities to explore issues and children are forming their own beliefs and developing their understanding of religion. Progression in experiences and skills in moral development is not yet secure, but progress is being made towards this. Religious education has a high profile across the school. Funding for artefacts has helped children understand religious practices with greater opportunities for 'hands on' experiences. Children's understanding of Christian values is well developed in RE as they relate them to real situations. Marking does not identify next steps in learning or give sufficient guidance on how children can raise the quality of their work. Whilst marking poses some questions, these require yes or no answers, rather than focus upon individuals developing their higher order thinking skills to accelerate their learning.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for the work of a church school based upon distinct Christian values that shape and influence children's lives and attitudes as they experience being part of a caring Christian family. He is enthusiastic and dedicated, creating a committed, cohesive team who share the school's vision. The school's Christian distinctiveness is reflected in the caring ethos with individual's well-being central to this. Support for children and families through counselling is effective in meeting a range of diverse needs, raising self-esteem and enabling children to fully access learning. Parents recognise that staff 'go the extra mile' in supporting their children with the same care often being shown by children for each other. Robust systems are in place to track children's progress and targeted interventions ensure that they make expected progress. Governors are committed to the school and provide effective support and challenge. However, monitoring has not included the school's Christian distinctiveness or the effectiveness of the provision for spirituality or prayer. Whilst there have been some plans to develop the school's Christian distinctiveness these have not been informed through monitoring and are not sufficiently focused. Children are not involved in evaluation as a church school. Further training has drawn upon Diocesan expertise, enabling the RE subject leader to successfully launch Discovery RE and create a new assessment strategy. A new 'church working group' has been pioneered by the head which provides mutual support for local church schools and opportunities to share good practice. The church makes a strong contribution to the life of the school. Festivals are celebrated in church which includes the whole community with children take a leading role. Worship in school is led by clergy who have developed a strong relationship with the school community. Church members play a leading role in governance. The community is often involved in school life and holds the school in high regard. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. The ethos has created a caring Christian community of which children are proud to belong.

