



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

### **Cherhill Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Middle Lane  
Cherhill  
Calne  
Wiltshire SN11 8XX

**Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding**

**Current SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: Salisbury**

Local authority: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: 5 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 22 April 2010

School's unique reference number: 126313

Headteacher: Terry Hall

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

#### **School context**

Cherhill is slightly smaller than the average primary school with 202 children on roll. It is in a rural setting. The large majority of children are of a white British heritage and from varied socio-economic backgrounds. They come from a wide catchment area. The number of children with learning needs and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the proportion eligible for the pupil premium. Attendance is above the national average.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cherhill as a Church of England school are good**

- Relationships throughout the school are based on the values of kindness and care for each other.
- Children articulate their opinions and views on matters of faith and belief with confidence and maturity.
- The commitment of the headteacher has ensured that the profile of religious education (RE) has remained high as an important part of the overall curriculum.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Raise the profile of Christian values so that there is a more explicit link between them and the school's approaches to learning.
- Develop themes in collective worship so that they more clearly promote the school's own Christian values and provide opportunities for children to have a better understanding of them.
- Develop greater consistency across the school in the use of higher order questioning in RE so that there is more challenge to the children's learning.

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

Children enjoy their learning and friendships at Cherhill which are lived out through the school's mission that every child is encouraged to take every chance to do their best every day. The school has worked hard to ensure that this mission is effective and makes a difference to the children's wellbeing and academic success. The development of Building Learning Power (BLP) to enhance children's achievement coupled with the school's seven 'Gems' contributes to the children's attainment which is at least in line with national expectations for most children. Children, and adults in school, are aware that the school's values, reflected in the CHERHILL acrostic, are also linked to BLP and the Gems but do not explicitly articulate them as being Christian in nature. Children clearly express how the values of the Gems link to BLP and consequently how they contribute to the high quality of relationships throughout the school community based on kindness and respect. BLP and the Gems are not directly associated with the values taught as part of the collective worship programme and then linked to the school's core values and regarded as being explicitly Christian. The school's values make an implicit contribution to the wellbeing and personal development of the children, excellent though it is, and have yet to be explored as part of their learning. Relationships are excellent and children show kindness and respect towards each other. Children have a clear grasp of the difference between right and wrong and a keen notion of fairness and justice. They feel strongly that everyone should be treated equally and that society should show tolerance towards each other. Children have good opportunities to develop a spiritual awareness through the creative curriculum through strategies such as 'super starters' and using the local environment to experience the beauty of nature. Children show a great appreciation for their local area and talk of the 'Downs' with respect and fondness. The school is effective in providing experiences for children to develop a better understanding of communities further afield whether in Britain or abroad. Practical examples of values being lived out such as sponsorship of children abroad and service to the local community are integral aspects of school life.

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

Collective worship is a special time in the school day and children say that this is important to them because it gives them the opportunity to be still and 'think of other things than just work'. Parents also say that acts of worship are important to school life as it gives their children the opportunity to learn Bible stories with clear messages that teach them the difference between right and wrong. Collective worship is good because worship themes have an impact on the children's personal development and spirituality. It isn't outstanding because the school has not done enough to explore explicit Christian values, in particular the school's own core values, and link them to worship themes to the same extent that acts of worship have explored other themes such as the six aspects of Building Learning Power. Children have an excellent understanding of prayer and the impact prayer can make to a person's life. They talk with confidence about God listening to everyone's prayers, whether they are Christian or not, because 'He loves us all equally'. Children pray with confidence and are comfortable to contribute to spontaneous prayers as part of worship. Children have good opportunities to pray in the school day both formally during worship, at lunch and home time but also use reflection areas in classrooms as they feel the need for a time of quiet. Planning of worship themes is effective and ensures that there is a clear focus on Bible teaching. Children have a good understanding of Bible stories and can articulate their message clearly although relating them to their own lives needs to be more embedded. Children are developing their understanding of the Trinity and talk with confidence of God as Father and Jesus his Son. They are more uncertain of the place of the Holy Spirit. Children have been involved in monitoring collective worship and have contributed views as to how it can be improved. They have also evaluated aspects of worship such as prayer and how they can be more involved in planning and leading worship. This process has started but more could be done to include children more proactively in the delivery of worship. Governors have some role in the regular monitoring and evaluating worship.

### **The effectiveness of religious education is good**

Standards in RE are at least in line with national expectations by the time children leave the school at the end of Year 6. This represents good progress from the children's starting points when they enter the school. Attainment in RE is broadly similar with that of other core subjects in the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The best teaching provides good opportunities for children to explore concepts in depth with challenging questioning from the teacher supporting children to think about their responses at a greater level. The introduction of a new scheme of work for RE in April 2014 has raised the profile of the subject and, because it places an emphasis on enquiry, has created far more positive attitudes among the children who now engage with enthusiasm. This is evident in the way that children show a keen curiosity and want to extend their knowledge and, more particularly, their understanding. When these opportunities to explore difficult questions arise in lessons, children respond with excitement and real enjoyment of the challenge. The move towards class teachers now being involved in the delivery of the subject has also contributed to the general perception that RE is an important part of the overall curriculum. There is not yet a consistency in the quality of questioning in RE across the school and therefore its impact on raising standards further, particularly at higher levels, has not been fully embedded. Regular assessment of children's achievement at the end of each unit contributes to the levelling of children's attainment at the end of each year. Some moderation has taken place across the school to bring greater accuracy to assessment which is leading to more secure judgements. This is still an ongoing action for development as is the need to use data to track children's progress across the school. The headteacher is the RE subject leader and has ensured that the subject has not just been maintained, but has moved forward since the previous inspection. She has developed a clear action plan that has accurately identified areas for further improvement as well as carrying out systematic monitoring of lessons and scrutiny of children's work.

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

The school has made progress since the previous inspection and is now judged to be a good church school against the more rigorous expectations of the current inspection framework. Leaders and managers are committed to the school's ethos and strongly feel that this is lived out and is evident through the quality of care and kindness that underpins relationships between all members of the school community. Parents echo this when they agree that the school gives their children moral guidance through the learning powers and seven gems. Governors say that the school's distinctiveness is reflected in the vicar and headteacher. The extent to which members of the leadership and management, including governors, articulate an explicitly Christian character that underpins the ethos is not fully expressed and so has not yet been explored by the whole school community. The quality of care for children, so evidently a high priority throughout the school, ensures that school development prioritises systems to improve children's learning which is making a positive impact on standards. The headteacher has a good understanding of self-evaluation as a church school and a secure grasp of what needs to be done to take the school forward. She has correctly identified priorities for further improvement but has not received secure advice from diocesan consultants to accurately support further improvement as a church school. Governors are very supportive of the school's Christian foundation with some foundation governors being fairly recently appointed. They have received some support and training which has proved adequate in keeping them abreast of developments in church school expectations. The headteacher, in her role as RE and worship leader as two of her many responsibilities, has ensured that both aspects of church school distinctiveness have at least been maintained and make a good contribution to the children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The role of the parish in the life of the school is a strong aspect of the school and relationships with the church community, particularly through the contribution of the vicar to school life, is recognised by children and adults as an important expression of being church school. Links between school and diocese are not sufficiently regular to ensure that secure advice leads to effective school improvement. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

