



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Chirton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Street
Chirton, Wilts
SN10 3QS

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: 06 May 2015

Date of last inspection: 09 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 126314

Headteacher: Executive headteacher – Richard Borman

Associate headteacher – Amy Bekker-Wrench

Inspector's name and number: Dianne Christopher (731)

School context

Chirton Church of England Primary School is a small rural school with 39 pupils on roll in two classes. Most of the pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium and eligible for free school meals is 15.38%, below the national average. The numbers of pupils with special educational/disability needs is also below the national average at 7.94%. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average at 96.3%. Since the last inspection a soft federation has been established another small church school. An executive head has overall responsibility for this school. An associate head is responsible for teaching and learning and for the daily management.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chirton CE (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The Christian vision, commitment and drive of the executive head teacher and the associate head teacher, senior leadership and governors provide a stable, secure environment, where all can flourish. This has had a significant role in raising the status of the school as a church school.
- Relationships between pupils, staff and other members of the school community are good so that pupils feel listened to, safe and eager to learn.
- Links with the church community are good so that learners are clear in their knowledge that this is a church school, which makes a positive difference to their learning.

Areas to improve

- Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of the church school distinctiveness as an integral part of school improvement planning, ensuring that a robust evaluation process involves the governors, staff and pupils.
- Develop all staff and governors in their strategic role as leaders of a church school.

- Increase pupils' confidence in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship, enabling them to experience a sense of ownership in this key area of church school life.

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

Chirton CE Primary School has experienced considerable upheaval during the last two years. The associate head provides clear leadership in building a Christian school community ensuring that pupils strive to achieve their full potential, regardless of their ability or background. Current school data shows an improving picture across all the key stages with vulnerable groups of pupils making good progress as a result of the impact of the Christian values of responsibility, respectfulness, resilience, reflectiveness and relationships that are firmly embedded. Pupils take a greater responsibility for their own learning by working independently and this has led to good progress. This is an inclusive school where all are valued and appreciated, where harmonious staff relationships provide good Christian models. The good learning environment, grounded in Christian values, provides a positive spiritual atmosphere. Pupils are proud to belong, feel valued and as a result achieve well. Pupils are eager to show what they are learning, speak confidently about their work and how they love to care for the school, reinforcing their understanding of caring for God's world. There are Christian symbols, prayers and values displayed throughout the school environment. External school mosaics and displays of pupils' RE work reinforce the distinctive Christian character to visitors of the school; pupils were keen to show the quiet area where they write prayers and can think or be still. Pupil's value being outside and Forest School is a significant characteristic of this school. The forest has become an outdoor classroom and is visited once a week, rain or shine. For example every child visits the 'Reflection Island,' in the forest, where the pupils are able to learn to explore, discover and worship, thus embracing all of the school's core values. Pupils recognise that Christian worship does not have to be in a building. One child said, 'We get to pray, play and learn here'. Another said that worship on Reflection Island is especially important to him because it gives him time to talk to God 'while listening to birds in the trees'. An audit of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum (SMSC) has been completed and as a result there is a clear definition of spirituality across the school. This is further enhanced by the introduction of 'Philosophy for Children', that encourage pupils to think deeply. Religious Education (RE) makes a valuable contribution to pupils' SMSC development. The Discovery RE scheme has created good structures for learning, allowing progression, consistency in teaching and learning and reinforcing the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Pupils achieve high standards in religious education that are in line with national expectations or better. Pupils know that it is important to learn about Christianity and other religions and that what they learn gives meaning to their everyday lives. The school recognises that the development of a link with a school in a culturally diverse area would strengthen the provision for cultural understanding. Local visits have included activities with the cluster of church schools, for sports and other events, visits to St John the Baptist Church and Salisbury Cathedral. The school council is proud of their school and enjoy talking about their responsibilities and care for each other. The 'Big Heart Bench' is a key focus for all pupils and is there for anybody who needs a friend or someone to talk to.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship holds a place of central importance in the life of the school and is well managed by the associate head teacher. It has a Christian focus and is viewed as a time when the school's core values are celebrated. Using the 'Values for Life' worship scheme, pupils are given opportunities to explore the meaning through Bible stories. Pupils' positive attitude to worship reflects the quality of daily worship and its impact on their spiritual and moral development. Bible stories are regularly part of worship and stories focusing on prayer and reflection enable pupils to develop an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The spiritual development of pupils has been strengthened through writing their own prayers. St. John the Baptist Church is hugely supportive of the school and the clergy are regular visitors. The church is used for

weekly 'Open the Book' worship. Parents appreciate how this has developed a sense of community, while pupils speak about how they value, enjoy and learn from Bible stories and Christian festivals. The collective worship is monitored and evaluated by staff and governors through attendance at services and discussions with parents, whereas pupils' evaluations are limited to feedback in class. They do contribute to school collective worship through singing, reading prayers and role-play but they would like to develop their role in planning, leading and evaluating worship so that they could have a sense of ownership. This was an area for development from the last inspection and, although progress has been made, it has yet to be fully addressed. In the worship observed, pupils were engaged and actively involved, including the time for prayer and reflection. Parents feel involved and as one parent stated, "As this is a church school, it's good that we know the values of the school and can reinforce them at home."

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

The executive head teacher has established a clear support structure that has developed at all levels of leadership, foundation governance and subject leadership. The associate head teacher who has been in post since September 2013 is having a positive effect in promoting the Christian character of Chirton School. The shared expertise with the other federated school has ensured that the Christian values and ethos, which lie at the heart of this school, are upheld. Senior leaders have addressed inconsistencies with the teaching standards and this has resulted in a stable, calm and secure staff. The school is expanding rapidly with twenty one new pupils joining the school since September 2014. It is, as the mission statement says, 'A small school with a big heart', and this statement is now embedded into all aspects of school life. One pupil explained the school logo, 'The cross on my jumper is there because it's close to my heart'. Senior staff and governors make sure the Christian commitment, to nurture each child, is made possible through good systems of pastoral care and well-being. Foundation governors are supportive of the school by contributing to the school's development as a church school through their roles as link governors for RE and worship and through policy review. Although the school staff are clear about its future direction, not all governors have such a good understanding of church school self evaluation. The school places great importance on personal and professional training of the staff and governors, although due to the recent changes in staffing, this is not fully linked with succession planning. Parents report that they are proud of Chirton School and of the impact of Christian values and ethos on their children's lives. They enjoy attending worship in the church and comment on the warmth and security in school. They feel welcomed and contribute fully to school life by helping to create gardens, quiet spaces and weaving Christian symbols into the school boundary fence. The school is on a necessary and ambitious journey but one to which the whole school and church are committed. Areas for improvement since the last inspection continue to be priorities. Statutory requirements for RE and worship are met through the federated partnership through which expertise and resources are shared across the three schools.

SIAMS report May, 2015 Chirton CE VC Primary School Devizes SN10 3QS