



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,

Station Road, Chinnor, Oxon OX39 4PU

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Date of inspection: 20th October 2015

Date of last inspection: 1st December 2010

School's unique reference number: 123126

Headteacher: Wendy Heritage

Inspector's name and number: Robin Sharples 398

School context

St Andrew's CE VC School has 260 pupils and serves Chinnor itself and the surrounding villages. The school has a lower proportion of pupil premium children but a larger than average number of children with special needs; the school has a Communication and Interaction Resource Base which caters for 10 pupils who have particular difficulties. The pupils of the school are predominately white British.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's CE VC Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The headteacher's vision for a church school has led to the development of a strong staff team who successfully maintain an excellent learning environment.
- Through strong leadership the school has developed a powerful holistic approach to learning based on Christian values which are consistently modelled by all staff and pupils.
- The school has excellent community relationships which are demonstrated clearly by the Prayer group and Open the Book and model a strong Christian ethos for the school's children and families.

Areas to improve

- Develop an agreed definition of spirituality which can then be used throughout the school to plan for and gauge spiritual development;
- Explore the range of worship offered in school alongside other possibilities to create a common understanding of worship which can be used as the basis of a worship policy.

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

Christian character is the vital thread which is found running through the life of the school. The priorities for learning and well-being are consistently drawn from the school's Christian values and have led to the school maintaining the outstanding qualities identified by Ofsted in 2013. The school continues to strive to improve progress and achievement through accurate assessment and excellent teaching. Pupils' individual needs are consistently taken account of. The same Christian character is present in the Communication and Interaction Resource Base which ensures that the pupils catered for in the base are able to work with their classes. Pupils' moral and social development is exceptional. This is borne out clearly in the excellent relationships found in school and developed through such initiatives as Rights Respecting and SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning). These complement the Christian values and are explored through worship. Support for charities and work on stewardship serve to strengthen pupils' understanding of social responsibility. Special occasions for spiritual development, such as the lovely example of Godly Play seen during the inspection, are present throughout school life and further opportunities are explored within the curriculum such as children's reflections on making gardens and the art of Andy Goldsworthy. Religious Education (RE) has a high profile in school, it has a powerful impact on reflective thinking, gives pupils a sound understanding of the role of faith in people's lives and a substantial basis for tolerance of the beliefs of others as expressed by children in discussion saying such things as 'All religions are equally important'. This is enriched by the care taken by the school to make purposeful global links through connections to a school in Gambia and specific curriculum work in geography.

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

Worship plays a very significant part in the life of the school. It consistently engages children with the Christian foundation of the school and provides an opportunity for prayerful reflection on the Christian values. Through their experience of worship children identify such elements as gathering, prayer and response. Worship has a direct impact on behaviour through moral questions and on personal development through the promotion of, for example, 'thinking about your thoughts'. Worship is planned to bring out the Biblical context of values, it incorporates the seasons and festivals of the Christian year and is well supported by the introduction of 'Open the Book'. The impact of this planning is that pupils have a good understanding of the life of Jesus and through the experience of worship gain an awareness of the Trinity, especially from the inclusion of Pentecost. Worship is deliberately taken beyond the whole school acts of worship into the classes. Class worship provides a sensitive and intimate opportunity for participants to pray, reflect and explore ideas. Two very good examples of class worship were seen during the inspection. Each classroom has an attractive reflective area which includes a display of values and includes a box in which prayers are gathered for the regular parents' prayer meeting. These are prayed at the prayer group and notes are written to the children/classes who wrote them to say that they have been used. This sharing of prayer leads to a very good impact of prayer on spiritual development of both adults and children. While personal spirituality features strongly in the life of the school and is a prominent feature of worship there is no consistent understanding or definition of spirituality which allows for consistent and focussed spiritual development. Planning of worship is deliberately designed to encourage participation and reflective response; this is particularly shown by the development of parent participation in 'Thought for the Day' worship. Both class and whole school worship provide regular opportunities for pupil leadership and planning. However the monitoring arrangements focus on presentation and performance rather than quality of participation or impact of reflection. While there is a policy for worship there are a number of understandings of worship available in documentation (including the website) and a variety of words are used for conducting worship such as 'deliver', 'lead', 'take'.

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

The governance of St Andrew's school is secure and confident. There is an excellent understanding of the Christian character of the school which underpins the whole leadership of the school. The headteacher has created a strong culture of learning which is well monitored to ensure continued development. Her vision is the driving force throughout the life of the school which inspires the school's holistic approach to learning, based in the Christian values. Careful monitoring and evaluation ensure that teaching, learning and progress are maintained at high levels. All governors recognise their roles in the leadership of a church school and have well developed structures to ensure that these are discharged effectively. These include a SIAMS committee which has a particular concern for the Christian Character of the school. There has been an interregnum in the parish which has recently come to an end, the new incumbent is already establishing productive links with the school. The areas for development from the last SIAS report have been addressed and the school ensures that the statutory requirements for RE and Worship are fulfilled. The school takes a serious approach to staff development which includes contributions to Christian character, a recent example being attendance at a diocesan Worship day. Members of Staff express confidence in their development and speak of this in relation to leadership within St Andrew's school and potential leadership in other church schools. Parents are very supportive of the school and very appreciative of the work that the school does speaking of the staff as consistently 'going above and beyond'. Members of staff are at pains to make themselves available and any concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents were also at pains to identify the welcoming character of the school, not only amongst the teachers and pupils but also and especially from the 'amazing ladies on the front desk'. Community relationships are well developed and the school is keen to ensure that all parents are welcome, a practical example of this being the regular prayer meeting.