



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ducklington Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Aston Road
Ducklington
Nr Witney
Oxfordshire
OX29 7US

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 26 November 2014

Date of last inspection: October 2009

School's unique reference number: 123107

Headteacher: Sarah Nisbett

Inspector's name and number: Allyson Taylor 768

School context

Ducklington Church of England Primary school has 197 learners on roll. The school serves the village of Ducklington and other parts of the Witney area. Learners come from predominantly White British families. The number of disadvantaged children and those with additional needs is below the national average. The current headteacher has been in post since 2011.

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

- The school's commitment to the Christian values of respect, friendship, perseverance and responsibility results in the good personal development and behaviour of learners.
- Close links with the parish church and diocese enhance religious education (RE) and collective worship.
- The school is distinctively Christian as a result of strong leadership, focused on Christian values.
- A rich, creative curriculum, referenced to the values of friendship and respect, develops learners' understanding of and respect for different cultures across the world.

Areas to improve

- Leaders to develop formal systems of monitoring so governors evaluate the impact of Christian distinctiveness, provision for RE and worship and ensure that monitoring leads to improvements in these areas.
- Ensure leaders consider the wider impact of Christian values and articulate how these improve achievement as well as develop personal growth.
- Provide regular opportunities for learners to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship to enhance spiritual development.

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

The Christian character of Ducklington has developed since the last inspection. It is an effective and inclusive church school where learners are nurtured and enabled to flourish. Therefore, the majority of learners make good progress in academic tests, often from low starting points. Carefully chosen Christian values are referenced to Biblical examples in planning for worship and these are then reflected in both policies and practice. One learner described how this term's Christian value, love, "helps us follow how Jesus was with his friends." The impact of Christian values is evident in the positive relationships and good behaviour across all ages. In addition to excellent care shown by adults towards learners, there is a culture of older learners supporting their younger colleagues. The focus on specific values, like perseverance, helps learners who lack resilience when facing a challenge in their learning. This is an issue the school works hard to overcome. Leaders and other members of staff have begun to consider exactly how Christian values have a positive impact on academic standards. However, this link is not made explicit or understood by all members of the school community. The school sets ambitious targets and is prepared to go the second mile, as Jesus said, to ensure learners meet their academic potential. All members of staff are committed to meeting the individual needs of learners and those interviewed spoke warmly of the impact of the Christian character in helping them to reflect on what they value. The curriculum is exciting and offers depth of study through enrichment weeks, often focusing on other countries and cultures; this helps develop respect for others. Learners have some understanding of Christianity as a world faith, although this is an area the school is aware needs further development. Learners demonstrate greater knowledge of Christianity than other faiths and clearly appreciate the opportunities to attend church for services and curricular activities. RE is popular and well-planned to meet the needs of learners. It is taught weekly and also interwoven into cross-curricular topics so that learners have a deeper understanding of themes explored. Much RE is delivered through role play, story, discussion and practical activities. This allows learners to express their own developing opinions. As a result of the creative way RE is taught, the subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners as well as reflecting the Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

All members of the school community place importance on collective worship and describe how it helps them work and grow in faith together. A range of worship for classes, key stages and the whole school is carefully planned to reflect the teachings of the Bible and the calendar of the Church year. The headteacher coordinates worship and provides support to other members of staff who lead worship during the week. This enables teachers to relate the Christian value to their individual plans for worship. Collective worship focuses on a value chosen to meet the needs of the community, for example, the value of love during Advent when Christians prepare for God sending his love, as Jesus, to his people. Additional themes are explored, often to support charitable fundraising and raise awareness of those in need of help in our society. Visitors from charities are invited to talk about their work during worship. This contributes to the spiritual and moral development of all in the school community and encourages learners to take action in fundraising to support others. Learners enjoy the range of worship and express a wish to play a more regular, active role in planning and leading worship. At the time of the inspection, adults and children describe worship as assembly, although there is an understanding among staff of the difference between these terms. The prayer spaces indoors are used for class worship and learners sometimes have the opportunity to use these at other times in the school day. However, learners state that they would like more opportunities to use them. The school is blessed in the support of the incumbent who enhances RE with activities in church and the worship life of older learners. The school marks the main Christian festivals in church and so ensures learners have a good understanding of Anglican festivals and traditions. Learners talk about God and Jesus, but have more limited understanding of the Holy Spirit as an integral part of God in the Christian faith. The views of adults and children are sought by means of a survey which includes questions about worship. As these surveys are very recent, the outcomes have yet to lead to improvements in worship. Monitoring of collective worship by governors is conducted informally at present. Foundation governors attend special services and worship in both school and church so they are aware of current practice.

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

Leaders ensure that all members of staff share the vision for the school. The vision statement and aims, developed after widespread consultation in 2011, reflect the Christian foundation. These statements are shared with parents and the local community through newsletters and the school website. The headteacher works with dedication and determination to promote the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. As a result, key policies refer to the aim and Christian values. Leaders and members of staff describe how the chosen Christian values support them in their work as a committed team where there is mutual appreciation of each others' talents. There is sound evaluation of the standards achieved by learners and what the school needs to do to maintain and improve these. What is less secure is the part governors, particularly foundation governors, play in evaluating the school's distinctiveness as a church school. Formal systems for governors' roles are not yet in place so their views on worship and RE are shared informally with the headteacher. Leaders express their passion for nurturing each individual and their actions are influenced by implicit rather than explicit Christian principles. Most of the areas for development from the last report have been addressed, although developing an outdoor space for reflection and increasing governors' involvement in monitoring remain outstanding. Due to the commitment of leaders, worship, RE and the wider curriculum are informed by Christian values. Leaders ensure that the coordinator for RE is given time and support in fulfilling her role. She demonstrates an infectious enthusiasm for the subject and her guidance enables other teachers to deliver high quality lessons. Links with the parish church, other church schools and the diocese help the school to grow as a church school. The school and church promote each others' news and events in respective newsletters. Parents, in particular, hold the headteacher and incumbent in high regard and state that the relationship between school and church is strong. One said: "it is obviously a church school; it gives our children important exposure to Christian beliefs and customs and this sets them up for life."

SIAMS report November 2014 Ducklington Church of England Primary School OX29 7US