



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Urchfont Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cuckoo Corner,
Urchfont, Devizes,
SN10 4RA

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: March 14th 2014

Date of last inspection: April 23rd 2009

School's unique reference number: 126366

Headteacher: Mrs Carol Talbot

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Sally Naish 780

School context

Urchfont Church of England Primary is a small school serving Urchfont and nearby villages. The number of pupils with special educational needs or receiving pupil premium funding is low. There have been two changes of leadership since the last inspection with the current headteacher having been in post since September 2011. There is also a new chair of governors. The teaching of religious education (RE) effectively reinforces the Christian character of the school.

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

- The caring and nurturing family ethos of the school where every child is known and valued.
- The enabling leadership of the headteacher, supported by dedicated staff and are reflected in excellent relationships and behaviour with good learning and achievement.
- Close links with members of the church community contribute effectively to the school's collective worship.

Areas to improve

- Embed vision and values to reflect the explicitly Christian distinctive character of the school.
- As identified at the last inspection, improve collective worship through more detailed planning, evaluation and pupil 'ownership'.
- Ensure that governors formally monitor and evaluate the impact of the Christian character of the school on the performance and well-being of pupils and staff.

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

The care and concern of staff in helping all pupils reach their potential is at the heart of the school, with excellent behaviour and attitudes reflecting high quality relationships that are based on implicit Christian values. Parents agree, commenting that they chose the school because of the Christian character and the family atmosphere, and their children are encouraged to be the best they can.

Children readily acknowledge that 'the best thing is the staff who care about us.' The inclusive nature of the school supports all children so new pupils are welcomed, attendance is good and there have been no exclusions. The school monitors pupils' achievements thoroughly and has strategies to support pupils with any additional needs. Although values are clearly expressed in policies and around the school, they are not necessarily promoted as distinctively Christian, and so learners do not readily relate them to the Christian message. However, the Christian message is very evident in RE which is well planned and provides many opportunities for discussion. Pupils are therefore confident in explaining their views and Christian values which they absorb from the school's ethos, RE and worship. In RE pupils also learn about spirituality, moral, social and cultural development and clearly find it relevant and stimulating, with several citing it as a favourite and important lesson. Children comment, 'It's good to know about things in common between different religions.' Themes in RE permeate the wider curriculum: older children are justly proud of work in design technology on religious unity that they had made during Christian Aid Week. Children learn about the environment through Forest School and eco activities and older children can relate to the importance of stewardship of the earth.

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

The daily act of worship has a good impact on pupils' spiritual development and children talk about its value and the relevance to their everyday lives. They explain that in parables 'people have to be clever and work out what Jesus meant by the message; so we are like the sheep, we sometimes get lost.' Weekly class worship, offers children the opportunity to explore, reflect upon and discuss beliefs and issues, a focus for development from the last inspection. The Rector takes worship in school termly and children particularly enjoy 'Open the Book' presented weekly by church members who prepare creatively and involve children in role play. Collective worship is managed by the headteacher and planned with staff, but this, together with monitoring and evaluation, is not detailed enough to inform future development. Children are keen to be involved in worship, have ideas for improvement and comment that they would like to take more ownership of the presentation and evaluation. Children understand that they 'light a candle to show that Jesus is here because he is the light of the world' and know the school prayer. Children say Grace at lunchtime with some commenting that prayers at school have helped them to pray at home. Their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is limited. All children are given a Bible in Year 3 and are presented with it when they leave the school. Children can recall stories they have heard and even the youngest children are engaged in worship. Following a visit to church, children in Class 1 spontaneously made a 'church' in class and re-enacted a service. Parents and the local community support Christian festivals celebrated in church and children visit Wells and Salisbury Cathedrals. After Harvest festival some children from school council, having taken gifts to a foodbank in Devizes, reflect in a report to the school, 'we need to help others because our world is unfair'.

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

The impact of implicit Christian values is evident in the ethos of the school although the evaluation of Christian distinctiveness is described as 'informal'. Strong partnerships between staff, parents and governors enable children to reach their potential. Governors are involved in the everyday life of the school, monitoring performance and standards. The headteacher is well respected, and parents comment that communication is excellent and that they value the open door policy. The headteacher supports staff development, and works well with other schools, taking a lead role in collaborative schemes such as hosting eco and infant fun days. Staff are willing to go the extra mile, and events, such as an evening of 'stargazing', bring parents into school to share learning with their children and help develop a sense of awe and wonder. Links with a Sudanese school are reinforced by cross curricular work in class, increasing awareness, empathy and interest in differences in cultures and religions. With changes of leadership, not all areas from the previous inspection have been addressed. However, the school has identified through development points in the church school self-evaluation that these need to be addressed as priorities.

