



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Himbleton Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Neight Hill, Himbleton, Droitwich, Worcestershire, WR9 7LE

Previous inspection grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 20 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 28 April 2011

School's unique reference number: 116821

Headteacher: Janine Burton

Inspector's name and number: Stephanie Boulter 785

School context

Himbleton Church of England First school is a small rural, village school. The school has gone through considerable change since the last inspection, with the appointment of a new headteacher in May 2015 and new staff also being appointed. There are 58 pupils on roll. The vast majority are of white British heritage, with 67% of pupils coming from out of the catchment. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Himbleton VC First School as a Church of England school are good

- The strong commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to the development of the school's Christian character ensures that it is making an increased impact on pupils' learning as well as on their spiritual development
- Through a growing embedding of Christian values, the school embraces inclusivity, which ensures that all members of the school community feel safe and able to share their views and ideas
- Staff and governors who work tirelessly to ensure that each child flourishes, with the result that each child is cherished on an individual basis, as a unique child of God
- There is a strong relationship with the vicar and local church community, who provide support and are central to the work of the school

Areas to improve

- Ensure that Christian distinctiveness and the school's core Christian values are explicitly shared with all stakeholders, so that there is a clear understanding of how these values impact on the daily life of the school community
- Establish a shared understanding of spirituality which is developed across all curriculum areas, so that high quality planning for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development can be undertaken and pupils' spiritual development can be enhanced still further
- Embed the new Worcester Agreed Syllabus for religious education (RE) so that the quality of teaching and assessment in all classes is consistent

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

The distinctive Christian character of Himbleton is clearly demonstrated through its commitment to the inclusion of all pupils regardless of their ability or background, whether they have faith or no faith. All are made welcome and benefit from being part of an inclusive and nurturing school community where Christian values are linked to Bible teachings and the life of Jesus Christ. Parents speak warmly of the care and support their children receive from staff but do not readily associate or understand how this is strongly linked to the school's Christian distinctiveness, which informs everything the school does. When reflecting on the charitable organisations which they support, pupils readily articulate that their motivation comes from the fact that Jesus cared for everyone and therefore they should do likewise. Relationships between all members of the school community are built on trust and mutual respect linked to the core Christian values of the school. This impacts positively upon pupil behaviour and levels of attendance which remain consistently above average. Whilst most pupils regard provision in the school environment, worship and RE as ways for them to explore spirituality there are not enough planned high quality opportunities in the curriculum as a whole to enable all pupils to express their views clearly, confidently and in depth. The school recognises its role in supporting pupils' understanding of the diversity of culture and faith in modern Britain, and have links in Morogora, West Africa and a multi-cultural school in Somerville Birmingham to increase this understanding still further. At the current time pupils have a limited understanding of the worldwide church, although some are able to give examples of Christianity in other countries. Religious education (RE) is highly valued by most members of the school community, and is well led and resourced. Pupils understand the importance of learning about religious differences, saying; 'we need to learn about the difference between religions because we should treat each other equally'. However currently there is inconsistency across the school in the teaching and assessment of RE, which prevents higher standards being achieved by some pupils. There is a wide range of after school activities which develop individual talents and skills based upon the view that all children should be enabled to flourish in their potential as a child of God. The collective vision of the school, which is to ensure all children feel valued and that the church is at the heart of the school, has not been explicitly shared with parents, with the result that the Christian character of the school is not as effective as it could be.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils and adults know that collective worship is important in the life of the school and pupils describe 'how acts of worship help everyone to get on well together'. Pupils willingly take up opportunities to be involved in worship, where their personal spirituality is developed through reflection and prayer and Bible teachings. Worship has a positive impact on relationships, ethos and culture with older pupils readily caring for younger pupils. Christian festivals are celebrated and appropriate themes are identified which enables links to be made between the life and example of Jesus, the distinctive Christian values of the school and pupils' own lives. As a result, pupils can describe how they try to improve life for other people, for example, through the money they raised for New Hope, a local organisation which helps children with specific needs. Pupils have a developing understanding of the Trinity and there are opportunities for pupils to write their own prayers, and use reflection inside and outside of the classroom. As a result, most pupils have a clear understanding of the many purposes of prayer; as one pupil confidently articulated, 'prayers help us when we are struggling by talking to God'. Collective worship is supported by the local vicar and regular visits to the nearby Saint Mary Magdalene church give positive messages about the strong relationship that exists between the church and school, as well as providing a good understanding of Anglican traditions. The 'Open the Book' team is led by a foundation governor and other members of the local village and this further strengthens the school's place at the heart of their community. Collective worship is informally evaluated, but this does not focus on the impact of Christian values. Consequently, this does not provide insight into how worship influences the life of the school or lead to improvement. Class worship

has been successfully introduced, giving pupils more opportunities to contribute to worship and prayer. This also enables them to gain a better understanding of how prayer, worship and the school's distinctive Christian values can be used to help them in their everyday life. Pupils see themselves as active participants in worship and say that everyone is encouraged to join in through singing, reflection and praying. Pupils at the moment do not independently plan or lead worship but the school is working towards this.

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

Since the appointment of a new headteacher in May 2015, the school's Christian vision has been clearly identified and the core Christian values, in place since before the arrival of the current headteacher, have been revisited. However, the distinctively Christian character of the vision and values are not clearly articulated to all stakeholders despite links with the life of Jesus and the Bible being fully recognised in worship. This work, in turn, has led to a renewed focus on the distinctiveness of Himbleton as a church school which is now beginning to impact on every aspect of school life. A good example of this is the personalised curriculum which recognises the uniqueness in every child. There is an inclusive, nurturing environment which is testament to strong Christian relationships at all levels. Parents however do not readily identify how the school's distinctive Christian character and Christian values directly impact on their children's attitudes and behaviour. All leaders within the school recognise this is a development priority so as to ensure the Christian distinctiveness of the school is strongly embedded and understood by all. Parents say they feel welcome and involved in the life of the school. They are confident in the school and in the way in which all members of staff are positive role models of Christian values in action, thereby giving their children an excellent start in their educational and spiritual journey. Pupils have some opportunities to discuss and reflect on religious and ultimate questions in RE lessons and there is some informal monitoring and evaluation of standards. Assessment in RE is not sufficiently robust and, as a result, does not lead directly to pupils knowing how to improve their learning in order to further enhances their SMSC development. The school has excellent relationships with the church and local community, and governors have accessed some training from the diocese so that they have a developing understanding of their role as governors of a church school. The school fulfils the requirements for collective worship and religious education. The headteacher and governors fully recognise that the next action is to apply rigorous systems at all levels to monitor and evaluate the impact of its Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and RE so that it leads to further sustained improvement of Himbleton as a church school.

SIAMS report May 2016 Himbleton Church of England VC First School Worcester WR9 7LE