



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Higham on the Hill Church of England Primary School

High Street
Higham on the Hill
CV13 6AJ

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

This inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Leicester

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 18 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 6 January 2010

School's unique reference number: 120133

Headteacher: Lisa Gilchrist

Inspector's name and number: Sheila Grice (165)

School context

This school became an academy in October 2014. It is a much smaller than average primary school, serving the village of Higham on the Hill and the surrounding area. The children are mainly of White British heritage but there are a small number of children from Korea staying at the King's Lodge Christian Mission nearby. A few children are also from a local Islamic college. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average. The headteacher has been in post since September last year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Higham on the Hill as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values are deeply embedded in all aspects of school life, resulting in learners having an excellent understanding of how these values impact on their own achievement and behaviour.
- The very strong leadership, rooted in Christian values, provided by the headteacher and the support received from staff, governors and local clergy is a key strength of the school.
- Collective worship is of a very high quality and inclusive, engaging all children.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes, which are heavily influenced by Christian values, are excellent, leading to confident, articulate learners.

Areas to improve

- Increase opportunities for learners to plan worship in order to further enhance the quality of worship.
- Embed the very effective systems for monitoring and evaluation so that they form an integral part of the school's self- evaluation cycle.

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

This school is exceptional in nurturing, encouraging and challenging learners so that they are confident in expressing views and opinions, which are clearly rooted in Christian teachings. On entry into reception most children are below or at age related expectations. By the time they leave school at the end of KS2, standards are above national expectations. Attendance is in line with national averages and improving. The Christian values of the school are deeply embedded and all aspects of school life are underpinned by the belief that 'we should live out these values in our lives'. Many children are able to give pertinent examples of when they have needed to forgive others and how much better they felt afterwards. Parents have observed the impact of Christian values outside school and one parent commented that their child is now able to use Christian values to solve conflict at home. The wealth of high quality displays in classes and around school affirm that this is a church school. Children have a good understanding of the importance of attending a church school, 'Where we learn about God, and apply what we have learnt to our lives'. The recent additions of posters in the playground with biblical quotes help to remind children how Jesus wants them to behave and children are able to reflect on alternatives to their behaviour choices. As a result behaviour is excellent with incidents of poor behaviour having diminished this academic year. Prayer is key to the life of the school and children are encouraged to say prayers both in assembly and at other times of the school day. Children regularly use the 'Prayer Plant' and they are confident to write their own sensitive and very thoughtful prayers which are then used in collective worship. Children have regular opportunities to develop their own spirituality by using the reflective areas in each class, the gazebo outside or during collective worship. Religious education teaching is given a high priority, identified as the 'fourth core subject' and it contributes extensively towards the children's spiritual and cultural development. Links with the Reading Tree school in India help the children to deepen their understanding of other communities and customs.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school is committed to the provision of high quality, inspirational collective worship that enriches the lives of the whole school community. It is clear that worship plays a central part in the life of the school as it enables the school community to worship and pray together. Diocesan themes, with a strong focus on Jesus and his teaching, are used to plan worship and full account is taken of the Christian calendar. Visitors, including the Open the Book team and local clergy, regularly lead acts of worship so enabling children to have a rich experience of worship. The use of St Peter's Church and outside areas, as well as classrooms and the hall further enhance the quality of collective worship. The attitude of children towards collective worship is very positive because they are engaged in worship and it supports their spiritual development. Strong Christian values are taught through daily worship and children speak enthusiastically about acts of worship saying, 'I just love Golden Worship'. Singing and prayer form an integral part of worship and prayers written by the children show that they are confident to pray and talk to God. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian and children are developing a good understanding of local Anglican practice and the Christian calendar. Collective worship has a very strong focus on the Trinity and the use of three candles and a response each day has helped children both recognise and understand that, 'God is three in one which means he is Father, Son and Holy Spirit and he is always with us wherever we go'. The very simple 'button' evaluation each day enables all children to evaluate what they will take from worship and use in their lives. The leader for collective worship has been instrumental in ensuring that collective worship is effectively monitored. Staff are quick to act on suggestions so that worship is continually improving, for example, some children wanted to see more Bible stories being told and this has now been addressed. The newly appointed Worship Team, an enthusiastic group of children, are playing an increasing role in leading worship by choosing songs (an issue identified through evaluation of worship), reading prayers and giving out certificates once a month.

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

The headteacher not only articulates a clear Christian vision for the school but she lives out and promotes her vision, which is rooted in distinctively Christian values, daily. She is well supported by staff, parents and governors with the result that everyone is working together as 'a family' to make sure all children feel valued and supported to achieve their very best. The leader for collective worship and RE is enthusiastic and committed to ensuring the teaching of RE is given a high priority. As a result of recent effective monitoring of both collective worship and RE she has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development needed to secure further improvement. Foundation governors encourage and challenge the school effectively. They are fully involved in the role of monitoring and evaluation having recently started to report more formally to the full governing body. Staff and governors have a very thorough understanding of the school's performance and Christian distinctiveness. A newly formed Foundation sub-committee will ensure the school continues to develop its Christian character. The school's self-evaluation form provides excellent evidence to support their judgements. Children and adults speak confidently about the school's Christian vision. As one parent said, 'Christianity has been put back into the fabric of the school'. The recent 'Christian Creative Day' provided wonderful opportunities for different aged children to work together and support each other through music and art. Children benefit enormously from the input of the wider village and church communities, for example Children's Church. This after-school activity is oversubscribed and provides an excellent opportunity for children to extend their understanding of the week's theme for collective worship or Christian value. There are excellent links with the local parish church which have been enhanced by the addition of a gate from the school field leading directly to the church. Regular worship in St Peters and supporting the same 'Toilet Twinning' project for Cambodia, initiated by the church, enables the children to feel part of the global community. All the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed and the school is well placed to continue to develop as a church school.

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