



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Culham Parochial Church of England Primary School
High Street
Culham
Abingdon
OX14 4NB

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 28 April 2016

Date of last inspection: 27 April 2011

School's unique reference number: 123132

Headteacher: Miss Lindsay Priddle

Inspector's name and number: Olwyn Davison-Oakley (NS No: 822)

School context.

Culham CE Primary is a very small primary school set in rural Oxfordshire. Most pupils are of white British heritage but there is a high proportion of pupils who trigger additional government funding. Since the last inspection the school has successfully avoided closure with the governors working hard to secure a substantive Headteacher and to provide a happy environment for the pupils. The current executive headteacher has been in post since January 2016 following a period of interim headship for one term.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Culham Parochial Church of England Primary are good.

- Values inform collective worship (CW), Religious Education (RE) and the curriculum, contributing to good behaviour, attitudes and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.
- Christian values are embedded in the daily life of the school, contributing to pupils' personal values and achievement.
- Pupils recognise the value of CW and respond and participate willingly because it is well planned and made relevant to their daily lives.

Areas to improve.

- Promote the Christian distinctiveness of the school through a focus on pupils' understanding of the Biblical foundation to the school values.
- Ensure that improvement is secured in Christian distinctiveness and CW, through support and challenge in planning, monitoring and evaluation by school leaders, including governors.
- Strengthen and develop national and global links to enable pupils to have a better understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith, and develop their respect for diversity.
- Further enhance pupils' spiritual growth by giving them more opportunities to pray and reflect outside of worship and more opportunities to plan and lead during worship.

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

Culham's commitment to Christian values underpins the life of the school. The headteacher and staff strive to attain the school's vision for each child, 'every child, every chance, every day' displaying an attitude of Christian inclusivity which values all pupils. As result children enjoy school, achieve well academically and socially and attendance is good. Most members of the school community recognise its Christian ethos and how it underpins daily life. They are aware of the impact that core values have on achievement and behaviour. Respectful relationships underpin excellent behaviour in the school. Children understand that there is value in being different whilst respecting and being happy to help each other. The older children regard it as their role to help the younger ones and take every opportunity to do so. The values shared in collective worship, RE and the school ethos reinforces Christian distinctiveness. However, although pupils understand that the Bible gives them guidance on how to live a better life, they do not see the link between the teachings of the Bible and their school values. This theological underpinning needs to be made clear by the school in displays and documentation so that children can understand it. The values also promote the importance of respect for diversity within other faith communities but the school does not yet have a planned programme of visits and visitors to the school to enrich the children's understanding of diversity. Parents are highly supportive of the school and are convinced that the Christian ethos makes a difference to their children and that the Christian way of life is at the root of everything done in school. One parent explained that 'since coming here my son has been able to develop and find himself'. They feel that staff nurture their children in an all-encompassing environment that puts their child at the centre of the school community. Parents are very welcome to attend collective worship and are pleased that they are now able to help in other ways in school. The school's Christian values, the curriculum and their commitment to Forest Schools contribute to the SMSC development of all learners. Children's work is celebrated throughout the school in displays and in an achievement book. Pupils talk with pride about the opportunities that they have had to raise money for charities. They talk with enthusiasm about the work that they do in school but make little mention of school visits. They are aware that Christianity exists in England but they do not have an understanding about Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. The relationship with St Paul's Church is strong, and Vicar Jennifer Morton continues to be a dedicated presence for the school throughout the interregnum.

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

The whole school community values collective worship. Following the last inspection, recommendations for collective worship were prioritized. However, events around school closure and difficulties in recruiting and retaining school leaders have meant that attention has been diverted elsewhere. Since the appointment of the current headteacher in January, a review of worship was undertaken by all staff and a cohesive programme is in place. Governors are now fully aware of their role in planning, monitoring and evaluation of worship and are very keen to begin this duty. The collective worship leader is aware that evaluation from all stakeholders, including children, is a valuable insight for future improvement. Worship now takes place in the Year 5/6 area of the school with a focal point of a table with a lighted candle. A sense of quietness is present during collective worship and the importance of Christian teachings is understood by the children. Features of Anglican practice are evident in the worship which is focused on the school's Christian values and the liturgical Church year. Biblical stories, often about Jesus, are central to the worship. Inclusivity is a significant feature in worship and contributes to the spiritual life of the school. Children enjoy participating in worship; lighting the candle, inviting the school to begin with words of welcome and contributing when they have the opportunity to do so. They lead worship at key Christian festivals and significant times in the school year in the local church. Pupils in Year 6 have recently planned and led worship for the school independently and the school is aware that this is an area that they need to develop. The well-established partnership between the school and the local church results in the children experiencing a balanced range of worship. The importance of prayer is understood, and the children expressed gratitude for the development of a prayer space in the library so they can reflect in private. A pupil talked about the shells and stones being 'good to focus on when you reflect'. Pupils expressed a desire for reflection areas in classrooms as well. Behaviour in the school is commendable, and can be attributed to the emphasis placed on the centrality of worship and its Christian values. Children do not yet understand the concept of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Parents and governors are invited to share in worship in the school and also in the local church

for Christian festivals and value these opportunities. These services are well attended by the school and also by the local community who see the school as part of their family.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors uphold the importance of the Christian distinctiveness which lies at the heart of Culham but this needs to be more explicitly articulated in order to be fully understood by all. The caring leadership of the headteacher is recognised by parents and echoed by all in the school despite the short time that she has been in post. One parent remarked that 'Miss Priddle has made a difference'. The impact of Christian values are key to life in the school although monitoring of the effectiveness of these is not yet being undertaken. Governors do not sufficiently challenge the headteacher in developing her Christian vision and evaluating how this impacts on the pupils' SMSC development and how this enables them to mature into confident learners. To ensure that standards, the RE curriculum and the Christian distinctiveness are improved, they need to work closely with the Senior Leaders in the school. Currently strengths and aspects for further development in the school are identified in staff meetings and then shared with governors. Parents speak highly of the school and are pleased that their children attend Culham because of the nurturing environment and the clear ethos in the school which makes a difference to the attitudes and values of their children. They are confident that the school's values enable their children to achieve well. They recognise the support and devotion of the staff, claiming that 'nothing is too much trouble'. Staff feel encouraged in their roles. Importance is placed on the professional, personal and spiritual development of teachers because of the clear understanding of the need to develop future school leaders. A very strong partnership which existed with the local church and its clergy before the interregnum is being maintained through links with Vicar Jennifer. This link with the community strengthens the school's distinctive Anglican character.