



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St Christopher's Church of England Primary School

Langford  
Lechlade  
GL7 3LA

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Oxford

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 10 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 9 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 141816

Headteacher: Shaw Goodwin

Inspector's name and number: Jo Fageant 104

#### School context

St Christopher's is a smaller than average primary school with 119 pupils on roll. All but one of the pupils are from white British heritage families and come from the surrounding villages, some arriving each day by school bus. A number of children are from forces families stationed in nearby Carterton. The school became an academy and part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) at the beginning of March 2015. It has two intakes: Foundation and Year 3 pupils arriving from St Peter's infant school which is also part of the ODST.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Christopher's as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values at the heart of the life of this school create a family feel and high learning aspirations.
- Leaders, including governors, exemplify the school's Christian values of courage, perseverance and teamwork in the ways in which they develop and share a good understanding of the school, value everyone and drive improvement.
- The importance given to faith within the school enables pupils to confidently and questioningly explore their own responses to religion.
- The excellent relationships the school has with the church enhances its distinctive Christian character.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure pupils have opportunities to take responsibility for planning, leading and evaluating worship based on a well-articulated understanding of inclusive worship in a school setting.
- Develop greater coherence in the religious education (RE) curriculum and consistency in marking and assessment in order to devise appropriate planning which will ensure progression for pupils of all ages and abilities.

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

The school's six values (perseverance, courage, honesty, respect, teamwork and compassion) understood from a distinctively Christian perspective create a respectful family feel and good attitudes to learning. Pupils say, 'Values make the school a nicer place because people think about them all the time.' As a consequence, behaviour and relationships are good. Pupils are polite, courteous and appreciative of what the school provides. Older pupils show genuine care for younger children. They act as peer mediators and playground leaders and understand that these roles are important and demonstrate perseverance, teamwork and compassion. Pupils also speak with pride about the nurture provision available for academic, behaviour and emotional needs. Whether they use it or not they understand its importance and recognise it illustrates the school's belief that everyone is important. This focus on individual needs is a principle applied to issues of attendance especially in relation to service families. Pupils say teachers make lessons fun. A Foundation Stage pupil thanked the teacher 'for the treat' of tasting food in a lesson. Pupils make good progress in their learning. Where attainment and/or progress is not as good as it could be staff demonstrate the school's values through careful and thorough analysis which leads to appropriate strategies to support improvements in learning. For example, new strategies, yielding good results, have been introduced to support reading and writing which were areas identified for further improvement. Pupils enjoy how their achievements both in and out of school are celebrated in Friday assemblies. This helps develop confidence and self-esteem. Pupils also learn the value of perseverance because there is always encouragement to strive to do even better. Pupils understand the importance of compassion and applied it to their understanding of global issues when they were keen to raise money for people in Nepal recently. This particular charity was chosen through a voting procedure on election day, helping pupils to understand elements of democracy. They also learn about this and how it relates to teamwork through their school council which they say enables them to make a difference in their school. Pupils understand that teachers live out the school's values. They say, 'teachers really get to know you. They guide you in the right way to go.' Reflection areas, books and boards in classrooms are well used and enable pupils to express thoughts that are important to them supporting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Through RE they develop a growing understanding of Christianity and other faiths. This helps them reflect on the relevance of faith for themselves and develop respect for others who hold different beliefs.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is understood to be an important aspect of every day and makes a rich contribution to pupils' SMSC development. It is also enjoyed by staff and on particular occasions by governors and parents. It draws on Biblical stories to explore the school's values and how they are important to Christians and the day to day life of the school community and the individuals within it. Pupils listen attentively and behaviour, relationships and commitment to social and charitable action indicate that they take the messages to heart. At the time of the inspection the Foundation Stage class had become particularly interested in miracles following an act of worship about the value of compassion which drew on the story of Jesus feeding 5000 people. Through the experience of eating bread and tuna children talked about the importance of everyone having enough to eat. Pupils throughout the school showed a good understanding of the meaning and importance of compassion as a result of exploring the value in worship contexts. Themes for worship are carefully planned by the headteacher and vicar with contributions from teachers all of whom also lead worship strengthening their own engagement with the Christian nature of the school's values. As a consequence, pupils develop an understanding of key Christian festivals, Christian beliefs about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the significance of prayer. Pupils write their own prayers some of which are on flags in the outside reflection area and others hung on a 'tree' inside. There is never a shortage of volunteers to write and lead prayers in Friday celebration and sharing assemblies. Foundation Stage pupils in St George's Chapel on a recent visit to Windsor Castle asked for permission to kneel and pray. Good use is made of the church for services marking festivals and a leavers' event. Pupils are happy to talk about what their experiences of worship mean to them and they have a variety of views. There is, however, no systematic gathering of these different responses to inform planning and development.

Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities to participate actively and some would welcome the opportunity to take some responsibility for the planning, leading and evaluation of worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

The subject leader for RE is enthusiastic and energetic in her commitment to the continuing development of the subject across the school. She took on this responsibility at the start of the current academic year and worked quickly to put a system of assessment and record keeping in place. This has enabled the school to track pupils' progress over this year although records over a longer period of time do not exist. This information suggests that some pupils are attaining high standards in comparison with national expectations. The school uses the Pan Berkshire RE syllabus and has developed a map to demonstrate the broad range of topics covered. Pupils value the subject for what they learn about Christianity and other faiths but say they think too many religions are covered in a disjointed way which does not help their learning. Staff identified a need for greater support with the subject so a good range of artefacts has been purchased as has a scheme of work. The latter has been trialled by teachers who are keen to implement it more fully in the new school year. This has already helped teachers develop a more enquiry focused approach to RE with tasks matched to varying levels of ability. Pupils enjoy the challenge of big thought-provoking questions. However, work recorded in books frequently fails to capture the standards of which pupils are capable. Best marking practice poses additional questions for pupils to consider such as, 'Do you think heaven would be the same for everyone?' but students are not always given time to respond. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of the school's Christian values and their SMSC development. It does this by providing opportunities for them to reflect on the personal significance of their learning and enriching their experiences with visits to places of worship.

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

Leaders express a clear Christian perspective on the six values which underpin all aspects of the school. This is made clear on the website, in staff induction and in collective worship. All members of the school community were involved in the finalisation of these Christian values. Now they are in place, they are beginning to influence the way in which policies are written. They are more than just words; they are understood well by pupils and modelled by staff. They have a positive influence on behaviour, relationships, aspirational attitudes to learning and pupils' SMSC development. The headteacher is said clearly to 'walk the talk' of the values. He demonstrates the Christian belief that everyone is loved by God in the way he deals with all members of the school community. Parents value the way he greets everyone by name each morning in the playground. Leaders, including governors, live out their values by ensuring they have a good understanding of the school and develop effective strategies and interventions in response to the monitoring and evaluation of well-being as well as attainment and progress. For example, understanding that reading and writing were areas which needed improvement, appropriate research of options and the implementation of chosen strategies has brought about improved results in both. In part, self-evaluation of the school as a church school is thorough and accurate. However, it includes limited evaluative evidence to support its judgment of the impact of collective worship and the effectiveness of RE. All areas for development highlighted by the last SIAMS inspection have been fully addressed. Staff are given opportunities to develop skills and speak positively about how membership of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust has enabled them to access training within the context of a wider and diverse family of church schools. Leaders appreciate the care, support and challenge they experience as members of the trust. Clergy see it as 'a safe place to guard the Christian ethos of the school.' Leaders have allocated responsibility for RE to a teacher who is highly committed to its development. She has been well supported and funding has been made available to purchase resources needed by staff to take the subject forward with increased confidence. A good relationship between the school and the church benefits both.

SIAMS report July 2015 St Christopher's Primary School, Langford, Lechlade, GL7 3LA