



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The Methodist Church



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Chittlehampton CE VA Primary School

Chittlehampton

Umberleigh

Devon EX37 9QW

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon

Dates of inspection: 19 March 2014

Date of last inspection: 7 November 2008

School's unique reference number: 113449

Headteacher: Steve Mellor

Inspector's name and number: John Rudge 704

School context

This small Church primary school is now in a full federation partnership with a local community primary school in Filleigh. Each school has its own designated leader as Head of Teaching & Learning, with an executive headteacher and single governing body jointly responsible for both schools. Pupils at Chittlehampton are from white British backgrounds and most live in the village. Very few have disabilities or identified educational needs. The school is situated next door to the parish church

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chittlehampton Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The school has firmly established its role within the federation as a distinctive and effective Church school
- The distinctive elements of its programme, including collective worship and religious education (RE), combine well to support a good standard of learning in a supportive Christian atmosphere
- The school has a close and mutually beneficial relationship with the parish church which effectively underpins, enhances and challenges its status as a Church school

Areas to improve

- Consider how to express and promote the school's core Christian values in a more coherent way, to increase pupils' awareness of the school's distinctiveness
- Involve all stakeholders in shaping and developing its vision and aims, so that there is

wider ownership of the school's ethos.

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

The school has a strong Christian ethos. This has a pervasive impact on the whole school community. Pupils accept the church as a natural and integral part of school life. They value their sense of being part of a Christian community. Christian teaching is a focal point of learning, and informs their formal and informal activities, from what happens in lessons, to the way they interact with staff and each other and through to their involvement in charity work and in the wider community. The school's ethos supports a good level of progress and achievement across pupils of all ages and abilities. School ambassadors, for example, are keen to stress the support and help they can give to younger pupils rather than drawing attention to their own status. The school is sometimes less clear about how to present and articulate its values clearly and coherently, for example, through its policies. As a result, its stated values sometimes tend to be implicit and general rather than distinctively Christian. Pupils are consequently less clear about how the school's values are underpinned by Christian teaching. Care and respect are stated values. The pupils' own version of the school's aims refers to 'looking after God's world and all his creations' – an aspiration amply demonstrated in the quality of relationships in the school and attitudes towards the environment. In spite of some lack of clarity, pupils benefit from a supportive, caring and respectful atmosphere. This ethos, supported through Religious Education (RE) and collective worship, helps them to feel secure and enjoy their learning. Their behaviour is outstanding and good relationships help to stimulate their eagerness to learn. The school's environment further strengthens this ethos through displays such as 'we all belong to God', portraying each pupil in the school as part of its community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship strongly supports the school's ethos and is a focal point of the daily life of the school. It underpins other opportunities for prayer and quiet reflection and is an important stimulus for pupils' spiritual and moral development. It focuses strongly on Christian teaching, for example through pupils' experiences of 'Open the Book'. They also encounter a wide range of visitors from local Christian communities. These include the parish priest, a regular and familiar supporter of the community life of the school. Pupils are very aware of the main elements of Anglican worship, which they experience particularly through taking part in services in church. Pupils celebrate and explore important occasions in the Christian Year, such as Ash Wednesday and Lent. Collective worship is planned thoroughly. Pupils are able to play a variety of roles in presenting and leading collective worship, and they are consulted about its impact. The school's Ethos Group monitor collective worship to ensure that it meets the needs of the whole school community and fulfils its role in developing pupils' spiritual life. However, the school does not yet use collective worship to help pupils focus coherently on its core values in their Christian context. Collective worship observed during the visit confirmed its overall quality as good. Pupils enjoyed taking part, were attentive and interested, joined enthusiastically in singing and participated in the story-telling. The atmosphere was calm and reflective, the main inter-active focus was on one of the sayings of Jesus and on how this teaching is relevant today. The presentation ensured that all the pupils of wide-ranging ages and abilities were able to experience the occasion at their own level. Worship concluded with an inclusive prayer in straightforward language.

The effectiveness of RE is good

Effective and often imaginative teaching helps pupils achieve well in RE. They are interested in their learning and their level of attainment is at least in line with their progress in other subjects, including core subjects. They are willing and able to discuss matters dealing with beliefs and values with interest and many older pupils are well-informed about the basic tenets

of Christian belief. Planning of RE is particularly effective. This applies to the way the curriculum is managed across a school with just two classes covering the full age range. Pupils take part in a wide variety of learning experiences suited to their ages and abilities. It also applies to the way in which RE is presented, so that it helps pupils to focus on understanding Christian faith and on wider questions and issues about beliefs and values. Older pupils are starting to become quite sophisticated in their emerging awareness of religious issues as a consequence of effective teaching and opportunities for independent learning. The good quality of RE in the school was observed during the visit, in which younger pupils were absorbed in exploring different ways in which they could help one another and older pupils were exploring some of the differences between Jewish people and Christians in their understanding of life after death. RE strongly supports the school's ethos in providing a clear and firm foundation of knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, as well as ensuring that pupils have an inclusive respect for those who follow other traditions. However, it does not yet have a sufficiently clear focus on relating a coherent set of core Christian values to Christian teaching, as a way of furthering the school's distinctive ethos.

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

Leadership and management are good because the school has taken firm steps to ensure that its focus remains distinctively but inclusively Christian within its new federated status; and because it has a strong vision of what is entailed in its role as a Church school. It is clear about the direction of further progress and development, but does not yet have sufficient clarity and coherence, or engagement with all stakeholders, to express and embed its core Christian values in the daily life of the school. The school leadership has already responded effectively to points for development noted in the previous inspection of its ethos and distinctiveness, and has arrived at a broadly accurate assessment of its own progress. An important feature of this progress is the appointment of an Ethos Group to challenge and evaluate the spiritual life of the school, to monitor its progress in this direction and to report to the joint governing body of the two federated schools. It is doing so to good effect. Management has also taken effective steps to address issues about expressing the clarity and coherence of its vision. The Diocese supports the school, for example through training to enhance its leadership of both RE and collective worship, with positive results in terms of the quality of teaching and learning and the spiritual life of the school. The enabling role of the parish priest has ensured that the local church is a natural, familiar and supportive aspect of the school's daily life. Parents in particular strongly support the school's ethos. The school is fully aware of the importance of involving all stakeholders, including pupils and the wider community, in developing its vision of the school as a Church school.

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