



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ashton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Road Hill
Ashton
Northants
NN7 2JH

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northampton

Dates of inspection: 2 December 2014

Date of last inspection: December 2009

School's unique reference number: 121957

Headteacher: M Whitlock

Inspector's name and number: N A Pett 157

School context

This is a very small rural school. Pupils are organised in two classes; one for Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils, and one for Key Stage 2 pupils. These older pupils are taught in years 3/4 and years 5/6 age groups on 4 mornings each week. The number on roll has increased to 48 this year. The proportion of children supported for special educational needs and through the pupil premium is lower than average. The head teacher, appointed in 2013, is full time and teaches for half of the week, with part-time teachers sharing the teaching of the two classes.

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

- Leadership and management has a very good Christian vision fully supported by the whole community and provides strong capacity for driving up improvement.
- The Christian values and the respect shown by all members of the school for one another lead to an outstanding ethos and learners' very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The impact of collective worship is good, and supports pupils understanding of the Christian faith.
- Learner's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is good because of the wide range of experiences pupils enjoy through effective teaching and learning.

Areas to improve

- Extend the opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship and improve the strategies, to include the pupils, for monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship.
- Improve the overall targets in the school development plan, including those for religious education (RE) and collective worship, so that they can be easily evaluated to show the impact of the proposed developments.

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

Although the overall judgement is good there are some outstanding elements in the way that the school meets the needs of its learners. Provision and outcomes have remained good since the last inspection. There is a very strong inclusive Christian ethos which cares and supports pupils' academic and pastoral development well. Because year groups are normally very small statistical data on standards is unreliable but an analysis of individual children's progress shows an improving picture. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making make sound progress this year. They are taught along with Year 1 and 2 pupils whose progress is likewise becoming stronger whereas in Years 3 to 6 progress is good. All learners' benefit from the very good learning environment. This is well set in Christian values of love and concern, aided by the breadth of the curriculum which strongly supports learners' SMSC. Standards and progress in RE are broadly in line with the requirements of the agreed syllabus. In the lessons seen teaching was good overall and previous work recorded in pupils' books shows that there is some very good learning. The overall approach in RE is effective in developing pupils' SMSC, especially in adding to pupils' awareness of the diversity of society. This is very challenging in such a small school where the vast majority of pupils are from white British origins. Pupils have excellent attitudes, enjoy coming to school, enjoy their learning, and feel safe in school. Most behave very well and are very confident in seeking support and in supporting each other through a clear code of Christian values and rules which they have had some opportunities to design. There is an atmosphere in which Christian characteristics of trust, forgiveness and perseverance exists. Older pupils display awareness about charity through both biblical and modern examples. The members of the school council enjoy their roles which impact well on their personal development and service to one another. The relationships between adults and pupils are outstanding with all pupils responding well to the expectations of treating each other fairly and with respect. Parents, carers and governors speak very positively of the school's Christian ethos and how it helps their children to learn and develop. 'Each valued, each talented, each unique' is the view of each child held by the school and it truly lives this vision.

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

The planning for collective worship is well guided by an effective policy and adherence to the church's liturgical seasons as well as reference to other world faiths and events. The overall themes help to affirm the Christian faith of adults and pupils. The effective use of the local church and partnership with the clergy especially extends pupils' understanding of Anglican practice. Learners respect that worship takes place in a special environment and the significance of a candle to show Christ as light of the world. Pupils can explain the ways in which their experiences in collective worship help them in their personal development and understanding of Christianity. This is supported by comments from parents and governors about how well pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes in collective worship is a valuable aspect of their personal development. Prayer is effectively used at appropriate times in the school day outside of specific assembly times. Pupils are fully involved in writing and reading their own prayers which show awareness and sensitivity to the needs of others. There is a good impact on pupils' SMSC development, effectively supported by these prayer patterns. Pupils' understanding of the Trinitarian concept of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is at an appropriate level for their ages. Although there are many strengths learners' opportunities to be involved in planning and leading worship are limited. The focus for improvement from the last report was to continue to develop a formal record of monitoring and evaluation of worship by staff, pupils and governors. Progress has been satisfactory and this work now needs to focus more precisely on the impact of worship. Parents and carers confirmed the

benefits that the children gained from collective worship in developing their attitudes and beliefs. Indeed, children take their experiences home and have brought prayer into the daily life of the family.

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

The headteacher has been in post for just over a year and has a clear vision and focus centred on Christian values. The evidence presented for this appointment clearly shows how well the governors recognise the importance of ensuring the future growth and leadership of the school through having its own headteacher. The governing body has recently been reconstituted and the proposed membership has appropriate foundation governor representation for a church school. The overall evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. The well-being of learners and all adults is well managed so that all feel valued, and develop their potential in a trusting community. There is a strong partnership with the staff and governors leading to the distinct capacity to carry out the required improvements. Leaders know what is required to drive up outcomes where there are shortcomings. However, measuring the impact of these good initiatives will be supported by the better use of targets in the school development plan that can be easily measured. This action applies to religious education and collective worship but also to support all aspects of Christian teaching and learning across the curriculum. The focus for improvement from the last report was to ensure that the school's Christian values and vision are more clearly articulated and displayed in the school booklet and on its website. The booklet now meets this requirement well and with the onset of new technology planning is in place to include this information and to make the web site more easily accessible to all users. Religious education is effectively led and the overall provision is sound. Policies for collective worship and RE are well structured and implemented. Opportunities are taken to use the Diocesan links and partners in the local churches in developing learners' understanding of Anglican practice. The learning, teaching and pastoral care are very well managed leading to the school's very good ethos. There is an excellent relationship with parents and the wider community. The legal requirements for collective worship and the teaching of RE are met.

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