



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Fladbury Voluntary Aided First School Church St, Fladbury, Pershore, WR10 2QB

Previous inspection grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 22 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 9th June 2011

School's unique reference number: 116879

Headteacher: Julie Wilson

Inspector's name and number: Marcia Harris 856

School context

Fladbury Church of England Voluntary Aided First School is a smaller than the average-sized rural primary school. There are currently 67 pupils on roll who are taught in three mixed-aged classes. The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average, as is the number of pupils with English as an additional language. The majority of children are of white British heritage.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Fladbury VA First School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- There is a clear vision for the school as a distinctive church school which clearly shapes its approach to all aspects of school life.
- The significant impact of explicit Christian values on behaviour and relationships in the whole school creates a positive, harmonious and supportive community.
- The Christian character of the school has a significant impact on pupils' understanding of and respect for diversity.

Areas to improve

- Further strengthen provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development through the creation of a shared interpretation of 'spirituality'
- Fully embed monitoring and evaluation of the explicit impact of the vision and Christian values into the governors' work so that the school continues to grow as a church school
- Develop the work of the worship CREW to include the regular planning and evaluation of worship so that pupils are offered a rich worship experience

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

Fladbury VA First School is a welcoming, happy and inclusive Christian community where the Christian values of thankfulness, friendship, compassion, forgiveness, wisdom and perseverance are deeply embedded in school life. Pupils link the school values to Bible stories and all members of the community can articulate with confidence the impact that the values have on their daily lives. Relationships, built on the school values, are strong and mutually supportive: parents see

Fladbury as a 'caring, supportive and nurturing place with a strong Christian presence' and talk passionately about the support given for individuals. They appreciate the way in which Christian values are 'injected quietly' into school life and celebrated through the awarding of a 'values' cup. The school's strong Christian ethos encourages all pupils to develop as unique individuals and provides opportunities for them to explore matters of faith and belief openly. Consequently, pupils at Fladbury grow into respectful and compassionate young people who have a high degree of understanding and respect for diversity and develop a real social conscience. This is reflected in their commitment to raise money for worm farms with Christian Aid and in their passion for ecological issues. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are rich and varied although the lack of a shared definition of spirituality means that the impact of this work is not clear. Effective religious education (RE) ensures pupils develop a secure understanding of other religions and of Christianity as multi-cultural world faith. Thus RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development and to the Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of daily life at Fladbury VA First School, where staff, pupils and parents all value the worship experience offered. Themes are planned around the school values and these are thoroughly explored through biblical stories and linked to current issues. For example, when exploring perseverance, the plight of refugees today was linked to Mary and Joseph's flight to Egypt. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how the values are distinctively Christian and see the relevance of them in modern Britain. Pupils are able to articulate the impact that worship has on their actions and behaviour; one pupil explained how, as a result of learning about compassion, she made friends with someone following an argument. A 'Trinity experience' at the parish church, together with the lighting of three candles during each worship supports pupils in their understanding of the Trinity; consequently, pupils talk confidently about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, explaining that 'they are all parts of one God'. The recent development of a worship CREW provides an opportunity for children to lead worship; however, pupils are not yet fully involved in the planning and evaluation of worship. A variety of staff, clergy and an Open the Book team also lead worship on a regular basis, offering pupils a rich worship experience, thus supporting their spiritual development. The school celebrates major festivals with the church; these events are planned and evaluated by a church group, made up of parishioners, the headteacher, the vicar and foundation governors. As a result, pupils are developing an understanding of Anglican traditions and the seasons of the Church's year. Prayer and reflection are important to all ages: the youngest children have 'candle time' and across the school children say grace, the school prayer and a prayer at the end of the day. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of the purpose of prayer, seeing it as an opportunity to 'talk to God', to say 'thank you God', or 'to ask for help for others'. Parents value the opportunity to attend celebration assemblies, 'Welcome Wednesday' and church services; this strengthens the relationship between church, community and school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils achieve the expected standards in religious education (RE) and attainment is in line with other core subjects in school. Children of all abilities make at least expected progress. The recent implementation of a new agreed syllabus has led to significant improvements in the RE curriculum. Pupils enjoy the stimulating and challenging activities offered in RE and respond enthusiastically. RE provides opportunities for pupils to explore the school values further, to ask big questions and engage in meaningful reflection. Consequently, pupils think deeply about a range of subjects and ask questions such as 'who created God?' and 'what shape is God?' Pupils have a good knowledge of key aspects of Christianity and are able to apply their knowledge, making links to their own lives with ease. One pupil commented that in the story of the lost sheep 'God is the shepherd and he cares for every one of us. He wants us to care for everyone too'. Pupils believe that the subject has real relevance to their lives today: one pupil commented that RE is more relevant than Maths, saying 'we learn about other cultures and this is important

if we want to understand each other.' This opportunity to learn about the beliefs and practices of other faiths has had a significant impact on the children and is a real strength of the school. One pupil explained 'RE is my favourite lesson. I'm a Christian and I enjoy learning about Muslims. They are our neighbours and I like learning about their culture'. Consequently, RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school and to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. RE is ably led by the headteacher, who has a good understanding of the place of RE within the church school curriculum. She is keen to see the subject develop further and has a clear grasp of the actions needed to improve the RE curriculum. The link governor for RE has supported this work by monitoring and evaluating RE lessons, leading to the development of plans for further improvement. Assessment in RE has been developed with the help of training from the diocese, ensuring that a previous key issue is addressed.

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

The school's Christian character is consistently given a high profile as a result of dedicated leaders who promote a vision deeply rooted in distinctively Christian values. This vision 'Happy hearts, open minds, bright futures' is shared and lived out in the daily life of the school by everyone, ensuring that this is a highly effective school which promotes outstanding personal development and good academic achievement. The headteacher works hard to make certain that the curriculum is informed by distinctively Christian values, thus ensuring that it contributes well to spiritual development, pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning. The climate of care evident throughout the school clearly demonstrates the school's core Christian values of friendship and forgiveness. Committed staff live out these values daily in all that they do, leading to a nurturing ethos where children feel safe, secure and happy to take risks. As a result, the atmosphere in school is that of a family, where everyone is made to feel special and incidents of bullying are rare. The staff team is strengthened by supportive governors who are passionate about their school. The leadership of RE and worship is given a high priority, ensuring that statutory requirements are met. Self-evaluation involves all stakeholders and leads to improvements in the school as a distinctive church school, particularly in RE and worship. The impact of this work is visible to parents, who say that their children often talk about what they learn in collective worship at home and are enthusiastic about school values. Governors monitor and evaluate the school's annual priorities and are well placed to extend these to include formal monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the school's distinctive Christian character. Pupils support a number of local and national charities, including Christian Aid and St Richard's hospice and regularly engage in community activities. For example, the annual 'bell boats' festival is a highlight for the whole community. These and other local partnerships provide opportunities for pupils to live out the school's Christian values together. The school has a strong link with the parish church and this relationship is highly valued by all. Pupils regard the links with the parish church as an important part of being a church school. Parents strongly agree with this view; they believe that this relationship has a real impact upon their children's spiritual development and also appreciate the way in which it makes parents feel part of the community. A real strength of the school is its highly successful partnership with a school in inner city Birmingham. All stakeholders talk passionately and with conviction about the significant impact this partnership has on pupils' understanding and appreciation for diversity and difference. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are highly effective in maintaining and developing the school as a distinctive and inclusive church school.

SIAMS report June 2016 Church St, Fladbury, Pershore, WR10 2QB