



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ampney Crucis Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane
Ampney Crucis
Cirencester
GL7 5DN

Diocese of Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire
Date of inspection: 21st October 2014
Date of last inspection: 10th November 2009
School's URN: 115673
Headteacher: Anne Marie Wilkie
SIAMS Inspector: Alison Lock NS 605

School context

Ampney Crucis CE VA Primary School is a small rural school of 92 pupils situated within the village but at the opposite end to the church. The school has very good accommodation and uses its space well to the advantage of the children. About one third of the children live in the village whilst the others travel from nearby villages and the town of Cirencester. The majority of them are of white British heritage with a lower than average number of children with identified special needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ampney Crucis as a Church of England school are good.

- The identified core values underpin this school leading to a community where everyone is celebrated for their uniqueness.
- The committed enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher in developing an environment where all feel valued and enabled to grow both spiritually and socially.
- The contribution to the community from the strength of the partnership between the church and the school brings clear benefits to all the learners and their families.

Areas to improve

- Develop the skills of the governing body so that they systematically encourage, monitor and evaluate the impact of the Christian distinctiveness of the school, including the impact of planning in religious education (RE).
- Establish a shared understanding of spirituality which informs the whole curriculum and adds clarity to the distinctively Christian character of the school's core values.
- Encourage children's developing independence, thought and leadership through their involvement in the planning of collective worship and by challenging their own thinking in RE.

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

All members of Ampney Crucis School community recognise that the school's values are explicitly embedded into the life of the school. As a result, they acknowledge the significant difference they make to their daily lives and the achievement of learners, both adult and child. A vision and core values have been identified by stakeholders and these can be seen throughout the environment both as displays and actions. However, the distinctively Christian nature of these has not yet been fully appreciated by the whole school community. Attendance and the academic progress made by pupils is good and is attributed to the fact that the children are happy coming to school because they are valued and celebrated as unique beings in the eyes of God. Behaviour amongst the pupils is very good and it is recognised that the strong relationships rooted in Christian values contribute to this. It is also modelled by the staff and is noticed by both the parents and governors. Children have an emerging understanding of Christianity as a world faith, as demonstrated through their involvement with a school in India and fundraising for Christian Aid. RE plays a strong role in the spiritual development of children as they are given a range of opportunities to express themselves, but spiritual development is not routinely planned for nor its impact evaluated. All teachers use times of reflection that focus on the current Christian value and how it links with their current learning and children are given frequent opportunities to express their own thoughts as well as take part in organised times of prayer and reflection. One child said that courage was their favourite value because that would help them in the future when they had left school. They are therefore, able to translate the values from school life into everyday life. This was also demonstrated by the number of families who created service snails as examples of giving service in their home lives. The church is used frequently as part of the planned curriculum and also to celebrate festivals within the Christian year. The children identify it as an important part of their lives and say that it is a 'special place for special occasions celebrating special people', by which they mean themselves. The vicar is a welcome part of the school, both as a governor and as the local incumbent. He has other parishes but prioritises the school highly and his input is much valued through pastoral visits, the taught curriculum, leading collective worship and as an active participant of the leadership of the school. He recognises the importance of the partnership between the school and the church and believes that they are mutually beneficial.

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

Members of the school community place importance on collective worship as a daily time for reflection and worship. Children participate willingly and respond positively which impacts well on their spiritual development. Staff lead weekly class acts of worship supported by the children and these acts of worship give the opportunity to differentiate more clearly the specified learning. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for worship demonstrating its high priority in the life of the school. Planning is detailed with references to the current value in focus, the Christian year and biblical references giving a strong framework for all the worship leaders. The structure of each act of worship is clear with a welcome, worship, prayer and a sending out thus enabling children to have a deeper understanding of worship. For example, the children understand well the idea of service to others through the sending out. This is evident through the way they mentor each other on a daily basis and the initiatives for giving support to others throughout the community and in the wider world. The values tree is covered with pupils' names celebrating the embedded values that are used as a regular aspect of worship. The values of the school are also recognised as part of weekly celebration worship when children are named and celebrated because they have demonstrated one of the core values in their daily life. Parents report that this is very important to both the pupils and their families. The children have a developing knowledge and understanding of the Trinity as a result of the varied programme for worship which includes involvement from staff, pupils, and members of the local church. Prayer is an important part of the daily life of the school through the use of set prayers, such as the school prayer, and child-written prayers. Children have a good understanding of different types of prayer and they know that prayers can be said anywhere and at any time and not just in church.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education at Ampney Crucis Primary School is taught as an important part of the whole curriculum. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for RE making the learning relevant and linked to other subjects in a way that has meaning for the learners. The planning is kept discrete and so coverage of the syllabus is clearly demonstrated. The headteacher is the subject leader and she monitors standards of teaching and learning across the school in a very efficient way reporting regularly to the governors so that the leadership of the school has a good level of awareness of standards in the subject. However, the governors need to include evaluations of the impact of planning in RE as part of their monitoring of the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Work is carefully levelled against clear learning objectives in Key Stage One and standards are in line with other core subjects. These records are then used by some staff to inform teaching and learning for the next term. Two RE lessons were observed as part of the inspection and these support the school's judgement that teaching is mainly good with some outstanding practice. Children enjoy RE especially when the subject includes a variety of strategies which encourage discussion and deeper thought. They mostly learn well but need more encouragement to develop their skills of enquiry and analysis. Visits to the parish church are used to good effect as part of the curriculum, as are invited visitors such as during the topic week on India. The subject leader regularly attends diocesan training and meetings so that her expertise is kept up to date and relevant to the school.

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

The commitment of the headteacher, supported by the governing body, means that the vision and core values of Ampney Crucis School are clearly articulated and manifested in practice throughout the school, resulting in good leadership. Governors are frequently in the school and play active roles by participating in school life but they need to focus more on the strategic and evaluative reason for their visits and use these occasions as part of the evaluation process within the school to further its Christian distinctiveness. The seven core values are frequently displayed around the school building, on the website and on some school documents and stakeholders tell the story of how they are evident in the behaviour of everyone around the school. The parents are very appreciative of the positive impact of the Christian values on their children's education. They always know the current value and say that it is often transferred to behaviour at home. The parents feel very involved with the leadership and management of the school. Their views are valued and used as they communicate in person and through questionnaires. The headteacher and staff are readily available and welcome comment from the parents. Links with the Diocese are strong as the school actively participates in projects such as the Leavers Services. Collective worship and RE are both led by the headteacher who places a high priority on these areas resulting in good practice which impacts on the whole community. Pupils are encouraged to be Junior Leaders and contribute to the school through the School Council. Their input has hitherto been mainly focussed on fundraising for both the school and children in communities elsewhere in Britain and India, thus increasing their awareness of the lives of children in the wider world. The school works closely with its local community but also works in partnership with a school in India. This has enriched the learning of the school community as well as developing the pupils' awareness of children in global communities.

SIAMS report October 2014 Ampney Crucis CE Aided Primary School, GL7 5DN