



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Little Missenden Voluntary Aided Church of England Infant School

Little Missenden
Amersham
Buckinghamshire
HP7 0RA

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Oxford Diocese

Local authority: Buckinghamshire

Dates of inspection: 4 July 2016

Date of last inspection: 5 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 110457

Headteacher: Michelle Green

Inspector's name and number: Sandra Symms 805

School context

Little Missenden Church of England (VA) Infant School is a very small infant school with 43 pupils on roll. The proportion of children in receipt of additional funding and those with special educational needs is below average. The majority of pupils are White British. There have been significant changes to the leadership of the school with the headteacher taking up her post in September 2014 as well as changes to the governing body with a new chair of governors in place since September 2015. The school was inspected by Ofsted in March 2016 and judged to be good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Little Missenden Infant School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The vision and drive of the headteacher, supported effectively by the governing body has had a significant impact on the school's Christian character and distinctiveness;
- Following insightful self-evaluation the revised Christian values underpin all aspects of school life leading to excellent behaviour, good achievement and supportive, caring relationships across the school;
- Strong community and church links put the school at the heart of the village leading to benefits for all children.

Areas to improve

- Further develop children's ability and confidence to plan and lead collective worship so that an agreed format is followed and Anglican traditions and practices are embedded for all learners;
- Develop higher order questioning skills in religious education so that more able children are challenged and differentiation is securely in place for all learners.

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

Little Missenden Church of England Infant School is a little school with a huge heart. Values such as trust, compassion, friendship and forgiveness link to Bible stories and verses so that they are distinctively Christian. Values are made explicit through vibrant displays, prayer trails, policies, the school website and newsletters. This leads to all stakeholders being clear about the school vision to provide a safe, secure, nurturing environment linked to the Christian values where children can develop morally, spiritually and academically. Children say that this is a kind school with no bullying and the values help them to choose between right and wrong. As a result behaviour is excellent. Values have a huge impact on the daily lives of the children. They say that they use the values as an example 'to tell us what to do such as forgiving one another if we fall out'. Year 2 children enjoy lots of responsibility and are trusted to do their jobs. This spills over into their learning as they feel that it is their responsibility to work hard and support one another. As a result children feel safe and happy which leads to good achievement and progress. The Christian values are key to the successful relationships across the school community. The school cares for the wider family as well as each pupil. As a result attendance is good but should any issues arise the school shows care and compassion so that families are supported. Spirituality is defined as something which is expressed with 'profound thoughts, feelings, experiences and emotions'. Children enjoy a range of experiences such as having moments to reflect on the beauty of God's world during Forest School, spending quiet moments in the school garden and reflecting about God in their classroom quiet space. One girl was inspired to ask for a reflection area in her bedroom showing how school practice has an impact at home. In addition to an impressive level of reflective practice these young children are developing their ability to express their feelings in an explicit way through the mediums of art, music and dance. Children say that they like hearing Bible stories in religious education and say that 'you have to think a lot about things'. Cultural links with two schools in South Africa help children to recognise shared values and think beyond themselves, developing their understanding of the wider world. Parents shared their varied cultural backgrounds on the successful International Day. As a result children have a deep respect for diversity and difference which parents feel 'is amazing'. Hence, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is seen as a time in the busy school day to celebrate together and to reflect on how actions can impact on others. Children say that they enjoy worship as it helps them to believe in God and Jesus and to learn about life and values. Planning shows that worship includes Bible stories with links to the values such as honesty. One child said that people won't believe you if you don't tell the truth and won't trust you showing that children make links between worship and their own lives. Children understand about Christian festivals such as Christmas, Harvest and Easter. They explain that the candle is lit to remind them that Jesus is the light of the world. They enjoy singing and contributing to school prayers and children say that they pray so that they can talk to God. One parent said that her son prays at home before meals and another parent said that her daughter's prayers include being thankful for nature, family and friends. This shows that some children are starting to make use of prayer in their young lives. Children show a sound understanding of Jesus. They say that Jesus is always watching us and shining down on us. One girl said that his love is all around us and he takes care of us, forgiving us if we do something wrong. Children are also starting to show some awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit when they say that Jesus was God's son and part of the Trinity. Practical activities such as plaiting three scarves together to make one reinforces this understanding. Children take responsibility for leading aspects of worship such as acting out Bible stories and leading church services. Their leadership skills are evolving and it is important this is developed further so that all children are confident and an agreed format is followed so that children have an increased understanding of Anglican practice. Worship led by staff or the vicar, takes place in school or at the local church so that the worship experience is varied. Governor monitoring has led to the inclusion of Bible readings in all church services. As a result of staff feedback, worship, which takes place in a classroom, includes a worship table with a cross, Bible and candle. This provides a focal point for children and supports the transition from learning to worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The teaching of religious education takes place at the start of the school day with a teacher dedicated to teaching RE to the Year 1 and 2 pupils. As a result RE is given a high profile in the school curriculum. Assessment procedures are in place and include strategies such as observations of children during lessons and scrutiny of children's work. Outcomes from assessments are used to inform planning such as where to close any gaps or when to provide more literal support. Assessments show that attainment is at least in line with national expectations and is sometimes higher. Since the introduction of open ended questions and higher order thinking skills at the start of the school year leaders say that teaching is now at least good and often outstanding. Questioning is starting to challenge children to think more deeply. This practice needs time to embed so that more able children are challenged and differentiation for all learners is securely in place. In a lesson observed, children were well behaved and attentive when asked to think about what was the same and different about Bible stories. The teacher made good links with the school value of trust, reminding children that prophets pray to and trust God. This prompted one girl to ask if this was a trust story showing how RE contributes to the Christian values. Children have a sound knowledge of a range of Bible stories as part of their learning about and from Christianity. They are developing their enquiry and analysis skills when they compare Bible stories or investigate the similarities and differences between the Jewish festival of Sukkot and the Christian Harvest festival. Children were enthused to talk about their visit to a synagogue showing good understanding of the main practices of Judaism. The monitoring of RE, involving the headteacher and governors identifies strengths and has a focus on raising standards. As a result marking and feedback is now linked to the learning objective. Scrutiny of children's work shows that they respond to comments so that marking is helping to raise standards. The RE teacher works closely with the headteacher who is the RE leader and as a result of diocesan training both are well informed on current developments in RE.

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

Leaders are confident that the school vision is rooted in Christian values. They talk confidently about the impact of the values on the children's behaviour and achievements. Governors say that values such as friendship and trust result in children looking out for and trusting one another both in the playground and classroom. This results in excellent behaviour, positive relationships and children who have the confidence to have a go, confident that if they fail their teachers and friends will support them. Governors have successfully developed strategies for monitoring and evaluation so that development points from the previous inspection are met. As a result of this, together with the headteacher's swift and insightful self-evaluation and timely, focused support from the diocesan adviser, effective strategies for improvement have moved the school forward. In particular the whole school review of the school's values, together with a relentless drive to ensure that they are embedded in all aspects of school life has had a significant impact on the Christian character of the school. Leaders ensure that learning experiences to support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are embedded in the curriculum. Strong community links are in place with everyone playing their part. Parents value the close knit and highly collaborative community which 'feels like a family'. They are highly supportive of the school, providing funds to enhance learning experiences such as Forest School, cooking with a chef and the refurbishment of the school garden and reflection area. School and church work closely together with church services taking place each term including Eucharist services. The vicar is a big presence in the school and children look forward to his responses to their questions such as 'How many Gods are there?' when he leads worship. Links with the wider community contribute to children's understanding of local, national and global communities. One staff member commented that all community members are part of the puzzle which fit together to make a whole with each piece being equally important for the well-being and development of the school. These excellent partnerships benefit all children by supporting their all-round development. The RE leader is given good support to fulfil her role, including diocesan support on implementing the new RE syllabus, leading to good practice. The development of staff and governors has resulted in the headteacher being well supported to maintain the Christian distinctiveness of this very small infant school.