



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Littledean Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Church Street
Littledean
Cinderford
Gloucestershire
GL14 3NL

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 19 May 2015

Date of last inspection: 17 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 115632

Headteacher: Hayley McGoldrick

Inspector's name and number: Alison Tugwell 810

School context

Littledean Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average school with 105 pupils on roll, organised into four classes. The pupils come from the village and surrounding areas and the majority are of white British heritage. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average as is the number of pupils eligible to receive pupil premium. The school has seen significant changes in staffing since the last inspection with two new class teachers. The headteacher was appointed in September 2013 following two years working as co-headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Littledean Church of England Primary School as a Church school are outstanding

- The caring, nurturing ethos of the school which results in a highly inclusive environment that is committed to meeting the needs of all learners.
- The impact of Christian values, especially friendship and forgiveness, which leads to high levels of respect and exemplary behaviour.
- The well established links with the Local Ecumenical Partnership which impacts on the life of the school and therefore its distinctiveness.
- The school's close partnership with parents which impacts positively on pupil achievement and the well-being of pupils and carers alike.

Areas to improve

- Further extend the current opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship so that all pupils who wish to be involved are enabled to do so.
- Establish dedicated spaces within classes and indoor shared spaces so that prayer and reflection are further promoted.
- Widen links with diverse communities in this country so that pupils develop a greater understanding of other faiths and cultures.

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

Littledean Church of England Primary School is proud of its Christian foundation which is based on twelve core Christian values that have a high profile throughout the school. Pupils and adults demonstrate these values daily resulting in a caring learning environment totally committed to meeting the needs of everyone in the community it serves. As a result, attendance is high and progress is sustained because of the inclusive nurturing environment which helps pupils achieve. The values are so deeply embedded that they also impact outside of school; for example a parent explained that her four year old child had given her swing to another at the park saying 'that's me being generous!' Pupils confidently link the values to scripture and explain how they make a personal difference. A Year Five pupil, for instance, explained how the miracle at the temple gate taught him to help others. Biblical knowledge is strong with another child adding that the parable of the good Samaritan could be a different story to remind them to be helpful. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. This contributes to the positive relationships that are evident in every aspect of school life as the Christian values are lived out. All interactions encourage forgiveness which in turn enables relationships to thrive. Care and support for vulnerable children and families is a key feature of the school's work. The school sees support for the disadvantaged, either academically or socially, as a key part of its Christian mission. Religious education (RE) makes a positive and significant contribution to the Christian character of the school and deepens pupils' understanding of the Christian values as well as of Christian teaching. For example, pupils in Year Three and Year Four were able to describe the qualities of Noah and link them to core values with one pupil saying, 'he put his trust in God because he did what God asked him to do.' The Windows, Mirrors, Doors approach to spiritual development is used very effectively. Pupils regularly contribute reflections to an inter-active display linked to the value. Pupil comments are insightful with many being moved to action in response to challenging world events. The school's use of Godly Play within Key Stage Two has further promoted personal responses and spiritual engagement with Bible stories. Through wondering questions pupils have deepened their understanding. For example, an artistic response to the story of Abraham and Sarah moved one pupil to state: 'We are all part of the great family!' As a result of the school's strong connection with the Local Ecumenical Partnership, pupils enjoy a range of visitors and breadth of experiences which deepen their understanding of Christianity as a multi-denominational faith. Links with Christian Ugandan Relief over the past ten years and more recently the Global Learning Partnership have secured pupils' awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Although the school's links with other faith communities locally and nationally are not as developed, biblical teaching and curricular experiences combine to have a positive influence on pupils' levels of respect with a Year Six pupil saying: 'No matter what you look like, where you come from, we can always be friends.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is an important and sacred part of the day at Littledean Church of England Primary School. This is because worship plays a key role in promoting the school's Christian values. Pupils can relate the school's Christian values both to their own lives and to Bible stories. Pupils can explain how worship has changed their views or behaviours and called them to action. For instance a Year 5 pupil explained how the story of Lazarus helped her to always trust and remember you can always do something to change a situation. Every act of worship provides pupils and staff with a challenge to their thinking, together with a time of reflection. This, along with additional opportunities for reflection such as class reflection journals, ensures that worship is a spiritual experience of real significance that has lasting impact. Evaluation of collective worship is well established and leads directly to improvements. For instance pupils now plan and lead whole school worship weekly as a result of implementing change following feedback. Pupil led worship is extremely popular and many more would also like to be worship leaders. Pupils are able to reflect meaningfully on the impact of leading collective worship with a Year Six pupil saying 'when you lead worship it helps your own understanding.' Pupils' understanding of Anglican traditions and seasons is enhanced through the regular involvement of local clergy and the wider church community. Pupils have a notable understanding of the Trinity and can articulately explain the symbolism of the three wicks on the candle on the worship table. The school visits the church for major Christian festivals for services

which are well supported by parents, governors and the local community. One parent said that she counts the school services at the church as her time for going to church and whilst she would not normally attend she feels 'uplifted' afterwards. Prayer holds a central place in the life of the school. Pupils therefore see its value, lead prayer during worship and contribute to the prayer book. A particular strength is pupils' understanding of the Lord's Prayer with a Year Three pupil noting that Jesus taught the disciples to pray 'so now we know how to.' The school benefits from a quiet area which is a memorial garden to two members of the school community who died. A Year Five pupil described this as a 'peaceful place where you can go and think for yourself.' A Year Six pupil recalled going there to be 'still' whilst reflecting on how best to apologise following a disagreement. However, dedicated spaces to promote prayer and reflection are not consistent throughout all classes.

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

'People with time for children' is Littledean Church of England Primary School's clearly articulated vision for the school as a church school. All members of staff consistently and generously make time for pupils as an outworking of Christian love. As a result pupils are known as individuals, bolstered and equipped to thrive. Consequently resilience is high and pupils achieve well regardless of individual circumstance. Pupils therefore benefit from the outworking of the vision which provides a sense of identity in Christ and belonging to the school community with one Year Six pupil proudly sharing art work saying: 'We are God's masterpiece. We are all unique with unique gifts to offer.' Parents also benefit from the outworking of this vision saying: 'They care about everyone. Not just children but parents as well.' The Family Support Worker provides excellent support for pupils and their families and this has significantly contributed to the trust and respect that parents have for the school. Parents turn to the school in times of need and the worth of the school's response cannot be overestimated, especially at times of extreme difficulty and challenge. Governors also fully understand the vision for the school and are key in maintaining the very strong focus on the school's Christian ethos. Training for staff and governors on church school distinctiveness has raised the profile of the school's Christian character at all levels. The formation of the Ethos and Values Committee flowed from this and is instrumental at a strategic level in the continual development of the school as a church school. Governor monitoring of the impact of the Christian character of the school is well established and informs self-evaluation and decision making. Over time the governing body has demonstrated a clear commitment to succession planning which has resulted in the current strong leadership which is fully committed to church school distinctiveness. The priority given to both collective worship and RE, both through the school's involvement in the Church School Cluster and in-house training, has had a significant impact on the school as a church school. As a result the school has addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection and statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met. Links with the Local Ecumenical Partnership are strong and mutually beneficial. This is indicative of all partnerships, notably parents and outside agencies, which are highly effective at all levels.