



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Tutshill Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Coleford Road,  
Tutshill,  
Chepstow,  
NP16 7BJ

**Previous SIAS grade: Good**

**Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Gloucester**

Local authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 16 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 11 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 115655

Headteacher: Jenny Lane

Inspector's name and number: Daphne Spitzer NS No 37

### **School context**

Tutshill Church of England Primary School serves the village of Tutshill in Gloucestershire, as well as the nearby town of Chepstow in Monmouthshire, Wales. The numbers of children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities are below the national average as are the numbers in receipt of the Pupil Premium. The vast majority of children are from white British heritage families. The previous deputy headteacher was appointed as headteacher in March 2014 and a new senior leadership team appointed at the end of the last academic year to start work in September this year.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Tutshill VC Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The role of collective worship in promoting the school's distinctive Christian values has a strong impact on children's achievement and personal development
- The high quality of the provision for spiritual development enables children to value faith
- The visionary leadership of the headteacher, collective worship/religious education leader and governors is providing strong strategic direction for the school's distinctive Christian character

### **Areas to improve**

- Provide prayer spaces and opportunities for reflection for use by children in unstructured situations in order to enhance their sense of personal spirituality

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

Tutshill Church of England Primary School is a friendly and welcoming Christian community. Values underpinned by Christian teaching, are integral to the whole life of the school and have a strong impact on children's academic achievement, personal development and well-being, ensuring that standards of learning are good. The school creates a secure inclusive Christian environment in which all children are cherished and highly valued in line with the core Christian belief that each is created in the image of God. This in turn has a very positive impact on the children's attendance and achievement. Children talk enthusiastically of the role of key values of perseverance and courage in promoting their learning and link them to the stories of Moses and David and Goliath. Relationships at all levels are outstanding because children say they are built on the value of respect. They say that it is important because Jesus treated everyone he met 'equally and with respect'. Christian values and spiritual development are promoted very effectively within the curriculum and as a result, their spiritual awareness is very well developed. For instance, teaching focuses on 'Big Questions' which ensure children think deeply in an analytical and evaluative way. This was evident when older children were encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs on matters of faith; seen in a child's remark that 'I do believe in God but I've still got questions' and a poem 'agnostic is me, God I hope is there'. Children enjoy religious education (RE) because activities are engaging and fun as noted when younger children were learning about the Hindu festival of Divali. Religious education is underpinned by the whole school theme of 'friends' ie. children who are members of major faiths and other cultures in this country. This is a highly effective approach which is actively encouraging positive attitudes of acceptance and tolerance towards others, values which underpin British society.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship is explicitly Christian and central to daily life at Tutshill. Distinctive Christian values are promoted very effectively during collective worship. For example, on the day of the inspection, the story of Jonah and the whale was used very well to illustrate the Christian value of forgiveness. Children were fully engaged following the narrative as it was acted out with frequent pauses to reflect on the feelings of the main characters. As a result, worship is very effective in promoting spiritual development. Children clearly identified with how Jonah felt when he had done something wrong and how it felt to be forgiven. They showed a good understanding of the Christian message that both Jonah and Jesus had been sent to show people the way God wanted people to live their lives. The high quality of children's spiritual awareness is evident in the way they confidently volunteer to say prayers spontaneously; as well as the way children refer to class worship as 'a time to talk about prayer'. Although children say school prayers, usually together before lunch and at the end of the day, it is not usual for prayers written by children to be part of class prayer time. Similarly whilst the spiritual garden is used well on occasions for class worship there are no designated spaces or displays within the school building intended to promote personal reflection or prayer. Children are developing a good understanding of the Trinity from the liturgical opening of worship and from support given to the school from the vicar. Their understanding of Anglican practice is good. School worship is supported very well by weekly visits to church for worship, led by members of the church ministry team, including the vicar and Children and Families Minister; a recent change of focus has improved children's enjoyment and the impact of church worship. Children say worship in church is special because the stained glass windows in particular fill them with a sense of wonder, thereby promoting spiritual reflection very well. The leadership of collective worship is outstanding. Following a recent review of its impact, steps have been taken to strengthen the way that Christian values are promoted. Children have opportunities to plan and lead worship as a class and have frequent opportunities to reflect on worship providing evaluations for the school leaders. Members of the Worship Club, a recent initiative for Key Stage Two children, lead worship for the Reception class

thereby sharing their enthusiasm and introducing an understanding of worship at a child friendly level.

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

The school's distinctive Christian character is of a high quality, is deeply embedded and has a significant impact on the whole school community. The headteacher's strong Christian vision shared by the staff team and governors' commitment to this vision are the driving force at the heart of the school's success and ongoing improvement as a church school. Under her inspirational leadership the Christian vision has grown from strength to strength with an increasing impact on the lives of the whole school community. The governors are exceptionally well involved in all aspects of the life of the school and as a result the church school's self-evaluation process is rigorous and very effective. For instance, a wide range of strategies are used for monitoring and evaluating the school's distinctive Christian character, both formal and informal. School leaders view the school's Strategic Improvement Plan as a jigsaw which is evidence of their good understanding of how their vision and values are at the heart of all decisions and actions taken. Governors' excellent strategic view of the school's performance as a church school is the result of highly effective professional development. Parents are very supportive of the school's distinctive Christian character; they value the open and transparent style of the headteacher and school leadership and in particular welcome their inclusion in the weekly church worship. Close working relationships between the school leadership and the vicar have ensured that improving the quality of collective worship and RE have been successfully prioritised. Professional development taken since the last inspection has been beneficial for all staff. The leadership of RE is outstanding. The subject leader has successfully ensured that a focus on questioning skills and spiritual development has been very effective. The strong partnership between the church and school has a significant impact on the life of the school. It is reflected in the way the church and school use each other's buildings for mutual benefit; including the Sunday junior church being held in school and led by a long serving and highly committed foundation governor. She has ensured that a valuable link with a school in Africa has been sustained over a number of years. The spiritual life of the school community was enhanced recently by their inclusion in the village Remembrance Day service which had a profound effect on all involved. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met and areas for development from the previous inspection have been effectively addressed.

SIAMS November 2015, Tutshill Church of England VC Primary School, NP16 7BJ