



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Wendover Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Wharf Road
Wendover, Bucks.
HP22 6AF

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current Inspection Grade: Good

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Buckinghamshire

Dates of inspection: 10 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 8 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 110421

Headteacher: Gareth Mirams

Inspector's name and number: Rev Tim Harper 827

School context

Wendover school is a larger than average junior school with 355 pupils covering years 3-6. Most children come from Wendover but a small number come from Aylesbury and other adjacent towns. The school shares a campus with an infant and secondary school with whom relations are good. In June 2014 Ofsted judged the school to be requires improvement. In September 2014 a new head teacher was appointed. The large majority of pupils are white British and there is little social and racial diversity. The historic and active parish church is at the other end of the town. The Rector is a foundation governor.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wendover C/E Junior School as a Church of England school are good

- The visionary and courageous leadership of the head teacher and governing body, based on Christian principles, has successfully managed the improvement of the school.
- The school has an inclusive Christian ethos firmly embedded in all areas, which contributes significantly to the wellbeing of all pupils.
- The school's 'restoration approach' to resolving disputes by analysing conflict from a Christian perspective ensures that relationships in the school community are good.

Areas to improve

- To enable more children to be involved in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship to enhance their understanding of Anglican tradition and practice.
- For governors and the religious education coordinator to formalise and embed processes to monitor and evaluate RE so they can measure attainment and progress.

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

The Christian character of the school is made explicit in both the mission statement and the learning environment and feeds into the life of the school. These explain how the Christian foundation gives all learners the opportunity to grow, creatively, socially and spiritually 'to prepare themselves for the challenges of an ever changing world.' The impact of this is that teaching is effective and academic standards are good, having risen steadily over the past two years. Standards are now in line with or above national expectations. The Christian character of the school is valued and affirmed by all stakeholders. The children talk enthusiastically about the Christian values of respect, reflection, responsibility and resilience, known as the 4Rs. These values are reinforced and understood as Christian through school policies and acts of collective worship. All pupils are encouraged through the Aspire growth mind set programme to become confident successful learners through affirmation and inclusivity. This results in the more academic children thriving in a challenging context, and the less able children gaining a similar confidence through learning in a thoughtful and respectful environment. All learners are supported in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development by the Christian character of the school and the creative curriculum, which enables pupils to be active, questioning learners. The impact of this is seen in parents saying that the school 'turns out rounded individuals.' The governors undertake regular learning walks with the head teacher to monitor the Christian character of the school environment. Colourful and detailed displays about the school, its ethos and distinctiveness are found in the foyer and many other parts of the building. These make a striking impression on a visitor and convey a strong Christian message, a focus from the last inspection. The distinctive Christian character of the school promotes and embeds good behaviour and relationships throughout the community. This is shown in the way pupils speak about how classroom and playground disputes are more easily resolved through the 'restoration approach'. This is a clearly defined process of dispute analysis with suggested steps for resolution. It is displayed in all classrooms and is used by staff and students. In this way the school's distinctive Christian values are understood, respected and applied by all. The children say this is challenging. Diversity, within the school and local community is accepted and celebrated. For example the Religious Education (RE) coordinator is a practicing muslim. Religious education informs and underpins the life of the school, reflecting and conveying the Christian character and adding to the development of the whole child. Different faiths are taught sympathetically, promoting respect and tolerance of other viewpoints. Children are provided with opportunities to discuss their thoughts and feelings about Christianity and other religions. A parent comments that 'My child is asking questions about faith at home.' The planning and delivery of RE is good, but the monitoring, evaluation and assessment of pupil progress (a priority from the last inspection) needs formalising and embedding in line with other foundation subjects.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is Good

All staff and pupils share in daily collective worship (CW) where the bible is open and taught, delivering a distinctive Christian message in a lively and interactive way to participants. In CW the values of the school are considered in the context of the Christian faith. A weekly newsletter to parents begins with an update on this, enabling the values to be explored further at home. Personal achievement is celebrated weekly at a praise service led by the head teacher. In this way, self-development is affirmed in the school community as part of CW. The Rector works closely with the head teacher and CW leader to develop a programme of worship that reflects the Anglican church year. Each Tuesday CW is led by a member of the local church, leading to a wider understanding of Anglican practice. All stakeholders warmly receive these visits. Emphasis is given to Christian stories; those of Christmas and Easter being celebrated through dance, song and drama. Through established patterns of worship children become familiar with liturgical practices. Examples of this are; at the start of worship a table is set with cross, candle and a cloth of seasonally appropriate colour and prayers are made

during CW with the Grace and Lord's prayer said together at the end. Prayer is 'part of the vocabulary of the school' and permeates activity in the classrooms and the wider school area. This uses both collective and personal forms. The children speak of the value of regular prayer and remarked that 'we pray a lot!' Reflective areas and prayer trees are created in each classroom and are clearly valued in that they are well used. CW always includes 'stilling time' for personal reflection on the message of the day. Two prayer leaders are designated every day to choose and read prayers from these in each class. Displays in class show that understanding of Jesus Christ as Son of God is good. The concept of the Trinity is understood at an elementary level. For example the worship leader may begin a session with the words 'We meet in the name of God;' and the children respond, 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' This understanding is reinforced by a clear visual display in the main hall using sign and word. Collective Worship is well planned and monitored by the senior leadership team, the Rector and foundation governors. Clergy meet with the CW leader who is also the RE leader to receive feedback on CW. An agreed action plan is worked out, which ensures evaluation is used to drive improvements. Regular reports are made to the Parochial Church Council. While 15 pupil worship leaders help prepare, deliver and evaluate CW, many other children expressed a strong desire to be more involved in the planning and delivery of CW.

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

Leaders readily articulate the way curriculum planning is influenced by the distinctive Christian character of the school. The vision of the school is under constant review by the senior leadership. The impact of this is seen in a three-year upward trend in attainment by all children. Parents also comment that the children quickly make links between the school's ethos, core values and real life. Strong progress has been made in all areas of school life since the Ofsted of June 2014. The LA review attributes this positive trend as clearly stemming from the outstanding leadership offered by the head teacher, senior staff and governing body. Governors make regular learning walks with a particular focus. Information is fed back to the senior leadership for consideration in strategic planning. The curriculum is thus effectively planned and monitored, with an agreed action plan supported by the school's Christian distinctiveness being devised by the head teacher, governors and staff. This has also improved behaviour. Recent monitoring by HMI and the Bucks Learning Trust has confirmed that children show respect to each other and to all adults. Relationships between key stakeholders are consequently very good. An atmosphere of cheerful wellbeing pervades the school. Attendance is much improved over the past 3 years. Parents expressed their delight in the level of teaching and pastoral care offered to the children. They feel consulted about the direction of the school, a focus for development from the last inspection. The pupils speak warmly of the staff, saying 'they look after us.' The school leadership articulated a determination to keep striving for improvement. Middle leaders are being trained effectively through suitable professional development courses for future leadership in church schools. Finding this training helpful, two senior teachers expressed an ambition to be a head teacher in a church school. There is a very good relationship with the parish church. The children make regular visits for special school services at major festivals and contribute to the worship. Parents and friends attend in large numbers. The incumbent works effectively with the school leadership to provide a secure context for the SMSC development of all pupils. Members of the church provide a weekly club for the pupils to explore the Christian faith. Parents acknowledge the impact of SMSC in that the church, school and wider community relationship feels 'joined up.' Initial links have been made with other local religious organisations, notably the mosque in Aylesbury. The Rector as a foundation governor liaises closely with the coordinator, head teacher and governing body. In RE the Bucks syllabus is followed ensuring that Statutory requirements are met.