



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

### Hagbourne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Road

East Hagbourne

Didcot OX11 9LR

**Diocese: Oxford**

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Date of inspection: 27 January 2014

Date of last inspection: 26 November 2008

School's unique reference number: 123169

Headteacher: Mrs Annette Crewe

Inspector's name and number: Jane Tuckett 668

#### School context

Hagbourne CE Primary School (VC) is an average-sized primary set in a village location, adjoining an expanding town. It currently has 201 pupils, taught in single year group classes from almost entirely White British backgrounds, with significantly below average special needs and disabilities and free school meals. A new head took office in September 2012, the previous head having been in post for 23 years. In response to a downturn in standards she has introduced measures for improvement which are proving successful and popular with parents.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hagbourne CE Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The new head has been pro-active and effective in quickly addressing the challenges which she found in terms of teaching and learning. Supported by the governors, she is now keen to address issues of Christian distinctiveness, giving confidence that significant improvements will be realised also in this area.
- Excellent relationships, behaviour and attitudes based on support, tolerance and respect and underpinned by strong values and Christian worship.
- Strong links with the local clergy and church community.

#### Areas to improve

- Carry out the planned revision of the school's underlying values so that all stakeholders are involved in their discussion, choice and implementation, giving them a greater sense of ownership and understanding of their Christian distinctiveness.
- Develop collective worship to make it a more consistently Christian and transformational experience in which the whole school community, including parents at times, can come together for worship and take the growing sense of prayer and reflection out into the rest of the day.
- Set up effective systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctive Christian character, vision and worship and respond by developing them appropriately.

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

The school is based on Christian values and these underpin its mission statement. Although neither education in Christianity nor personal spirituality features among the aims of the school and its logo makes no reference to its distinctive character, there is a sense of lived Christianity stemming from collective worship and strong links with the local clergy and church community in addition to the underlying values. However, pupils and parents are unclear about what the values are and why they are particularly Christian rather than just moral or social. Relationships throughout the school community are positive and supportive resulting in good behaviour and strong personal development; the school promotes self-esteem and confidence fostering a sense of achievement. Pupils are polite and courteous and the caring and tolerant ethos with inclusion of all pupils in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities gives pupils a sense of security, both physical and emotional, and the confidence to take responsibility and become independent. A family atmosphere is considered by many to be one of the major strengths of the school, although nobody can explain how the idea of the Christian family might impact on this. The school council as well as individual pupils are imaginative and enthusiastic in various charity and other ventures. However, there have been significant shortfalls in pupil attainment, resulting from a lack of direction, challenge and expectation on the part of staff and failings to monitor standards as closely as desirable by both staff and governors. The new head, fully supported by the governors, has devised effective strategies to improve this situation and positive trends are already being detected. The school has strong links with various local schools and a Comenius link with Poland and Turkey is enhancing international awareness. RE is now taught according to the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus and, led by an enthusiastic subject leader, helps pupils to learn about other faiths and understand the diversity of a multi-cultural society. Planned support for teachers in delivering the content of the syllabus and greater use of new techniques for assessment and evaluating progress in line with those now used in core subjects should further improve standards. Godly Play techniques are used for creative storytelling giving pupils the opportunity to respond in a more reflective manner to Christian stories. The school has Eco School Ambassador status and there is considerable enthusiasm for ecological issues. One pupil was able to explain that we must look after our world because God created it and has made us responsible for it.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory**

Daily collective worship is important in presenting the values and associated themes which shape behaviour and attitudes among the school community, but there is also a growing sense of a worshipping Christian community within the school. Children show their respect for it through orderly behaviour, enthusiastic singing, learning of responses and respectful silence during prayers and reflection. A new cycle of 'more Christian' values has been trialed since October 2013 as a basis for planning worship, although the key question of Christian distinctiveness has yet to be addressed, resulting in some confusion on this issue. At present the impact of worship on the school community is not evaluated making it difficult to design appropriate strategies for improvement. The local clergy are very involved in the life of the school; the rector leads worship once a week and is involved in its planning with dedicated Biblical slots in the worship schedule. Some important festivals in the Christian year are celebrated with services in the parish church and pupils are assisted in preparing and leading some of these, giving a sense of ownership. The Eucharist is celebrated three times a year with teaching about its significance beforehand from clergy and pupil involvement in the service. The Lord's Prayer is used regularly and pupils write their own prayers which they are keen to share; the prayer board is well-used and pupils have contributed to a prayer tree and a memory tree in church. A recent prayer day in school gave opportunities for learning more about prayer and writing individual prayers, as well as participation by all pupils and adults (teaching staff, governors, office and kitchen staff) in considering the school's Christian character and producing a new school prayer, which is now in regular use. The school has

identified the need for more specific teaching on the Trinity. Pupils are involved in worship in different capacities but the school has identified the need for greater participation, planning, leading and evaluating worship for the whole school community, including the parents. An attractive sensory garden and the tranquility dome in the playground give opportunities for a quiet moment when the weather is appropriate but there is little provision for reflection within the school building.

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

The new head inherited a deficit budget and a significant downturn in standards resulting from poor teaching practice which she highlighted with the governors very swiftly. From the outset, they have been fully supportive of the various strategies set up for staff development in terms of current practice and a new teaching and learning policy and are already driving forward school improvement through more rigorous hands-on management. Improved pupil progress is already being shown through evaluation of standards, a sign that the new strategies are proving successful. The deficit budget has been cleared, giving greater scope for measures to support improvement, including the appointment of a male deputy head who, with another male teacher, is providing a good male role model for boys as well as being a proponent of more modern practices for teaching, monitoring and assessment. The governors are now more active in their questioning about pupil progress and general school management but need to set up systems for the effective monitoring and evaluation of the changes that have been made and of the school's Christian distinctiveness and values and their impact on the spiritual development of the whole school community. Just as they were unaware of the downturn in standards there has been some lack of awareness of the changing expectations of church schools in terms of articulating and clearly communicating a Christian vision since the last SIAS inspection in 2008. A lack of effective middle leadership has been highlighted as a significant weakness in the school's management structure and two staff members are now attending a middle leader course. The school has highlighted a need for professional development in RE and this is scheduled for the current year. The head is in partnership with other local schools and is working particularly closely with two other church schools, finding these links beneficial at many levels, from shared extra-curricular activities to staff training and mentoring to strategic planning. The local rector and other clergy are fully involved in the life of the school giving a strong sense of a wider Christian community. Staff feel supported while admitting that change after a long time is never easy. Parents are very positive about the changes that have been made in many areas of school life and already recognise benefits to their children's progress, development and enjoyment of school. They support the school in different ways at a day to day level and greatly appreciate the school's policy of greater openness, transparency, communication and dialogue.

SIAMS report January 2014 Hagbourne CE Primary Main Road, East Hagbourne, OX11 9LR