



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Haresfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Haresfield
Stonehouse
Gloucestershire
GL10 3EF

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire LA

Date of inspection: 13 January 2015

Date of last inspection: 2 March 2010

School's unique reference number: 115626

Headteacher: Rachel Bacon

Inspector's name and number: Muriel Griffiths NS268

School context

Haresfield is a small village school with 104 pupils on roll, who come mainly from villages in the local area. The majority of children are white British. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium, supported at school action plus or through a statement of special needs is well below average. The school is set in attractive grounds that provide a good learning environment and is close to the parish church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Haresfield as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding leadership by the headteacher together with the good teamwork of governors and staff provides strong direction for the development of the school's distinctive Christian character.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) make an excellent contribution to the promotion of the school's Christian ethos.
- An environment where children are valued as individuals and as a result, their talents are given every opportunity to flourish.

Areas to improve

- Widen links with diverse communities in this country so that children develop a greater understanding and respect for people of other faiths and cultures.
- Continue with the development of the spiritual garden by providing more opportunities for its use across the curriculum so giving children more time for quiet reflection in order to enhance their spiritual development.

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

Haresfield is a happy, caring Christian community where all children feel highly valued and special. Distinctive Christian values have an excellent impact on children's academic achievement and personal well-being and can be attributed to the way that children apply the school's chosen values to their attitudes to learning. The school shows strong awareness of providing extra support for vulnerable children by close tracking of each individual and early intervention, so demonstrating its caring ethos. The values are covered in depth through collective worship, as an integral part of the curriculum and reinforced by the example set by adults in school. Consequently pupils learn in a safe and secure environment where they are taught to reflect on their own attitudes and conduct. The warm, caring ethos is evident in the excellent relationships enjoyed at all levels throughout the school community. Behaviour amongst all groups of children is excellent and can be attributed to the way in which everyone understands the Christian values and wishes to live by them. Children are proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about what they are learning and the many activities provided for them through the lively, creative curriculum. The school's strong Christian ethos, collective worship and RE are effective in supporting children's spiritual, moral and social development. The school has developed a shared understanding of spirituality and how it can be put into practice through curriculum planning, interactive reflective areas in each classroom and around the school. Regular use of 'windows, mirrors and doors' (an activity to promote children's spiritual development) also provides teachers with evidence of progress in each child's spiritual development. A 'spiritual garden' has been developed and needs further consideration as to how it should be used across the whole curriculum. During an RE lesson, children listening to the story of Zacchaeus, were helped to understand that he showed courage in the choice he made to talk to Jesus. This made a good link with the current value, 'courage', and helped children to apply it to their everyday lives. Children explain that the values 'come from Bible teaching' and they 'are what Christians aim to achieve in their lives'. Parents appreciate the way that children support each other and collaborate very effectively in their learning, demonstrating a Christian responsibility for the whole school family. Children listen respectfully to one another and share their views and opinions as they know that what they have to say will be valued. Children are active in a number of charitable activities which demonstrate that they want to help to make the world a better place. They support local charities and also 'Tear Fund' recognising that they can make a difference to people's lives. Children know that their involvement with these charities means that they are helping people locally and all over the world who are suffering, and understand that their contributions demonstrate God's love and care. Children have a good awareness of Christianity as a global faith but the school recognises that children need to have a greater understanding of cultural diversity in this country.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is explicitly Christian and central to daily life at Haresfield. This is because it is highly effective in promoting the school's Christian values. It is important to the school community because it brings everyone together to worship God and demonstrate their care for each other as a school family. Children recognise its importance and are able to talk about what it means to them. They know that Christian values play an important role in the life of the school and easily link them with Christ's teaching and His life through the Bible stories that they hear during collective worship. They say that they enjoy worship because 'it provides time with God and to be quiet' and 'Mondays are special because we come back to school to worship God again'. Children are fully engaged through leading prayers, singing and enjoying opportunities for quiet times of reflection. They describe the time of quiet reflection as 'moments with God'. Children frequently participate in various aspects of worship, such as role play or leading prayer. In addition, there are regular opportunities for children to plan and lead worship. For example, older children plan and lead worship with younger children in class worship, which helps them to have good understanding of the different elements of worship.

Children are helped to apply what they are learning to their everyday lives; for example, after hearing the Bible story about Joshua, they reflected on the current value, 'courage' and considered times in their lives when they needed to be courageous. The themes for worship expand on key Christian beliefs and the school's core values. They are always relevant and fresh as they are revised in the light of regular discussion and feedback from pupils, staff and parents, which was an area for improvement in the previous inspection. Anglican practice is promoted well. Great attention is paid to following the Anglican pattern of worship and pupils are able to identify different elements that mean most to them as individuals. This is apparent in the lighting of three candles, the responses between the children and the person leading worship and the focus table. Children can explain the symbolism of the three candles as representing God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The school celebrates all major Christian festivals in church and these events are well supported by parents, governors and the local community, so giving the whole community opportunities to join the school for worship. The whole school community has opportunities to give their opinions on collective worship and these are considered and acted upon appropriately. Pupils are confident to use prayer formally in worship as well as for their own personal needs, as when they talk about how they deal with things that concern them, they explain, 'we can talk to God about them'.

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

The headteacher's Christian vision for the school and her strong commitment to this vision are inspirational. School leaders and governors have a well-established understanding of how the Christian faith underpins all aspects of the school's life. Through regular visits to the school, governors have a good knowledge of strengths and areas that need further development. At Haresfield, a community has been created where Christian values are not only expressed, but are 'lived out' and are at the heart of the school. The quality of leadership by the headteacher, well supported by the RE co-ordinator and staff, contributes significantly to the success of this Church of England school. The headteacher, staff and governors are united in their desire to strive for continual improvement which benefits all members of the school community. Actions taken are sharply focused on exactly what needs to improve. The same is true of any training undertaken and the benefits of diocesan courses are clearly visible. The school leadership greatly values the work and well-being of staff and this is evident in the way that members of staff work together as a team. Parents are very appreciative of the school's Christian character which they say 'permeates the whole life of the school'. Parents have a strong relationship with the school. They recognise how its Christian character develops spiritual and moral qualities in their children and support this from home. Parents appreciated the invitation to visit the school one afternoon when various interactive activities with the children were planned for them. The activities included drama telling the story of 'The Good Samaritan', reflection using 'windows, mirrors and doors' and a quiet prayer room. This helped parents to further their understanding of what 'Christian distinctiveness' means to the school. The RE co-ordinator leads the subject very effectively ensuring that it plays an important role in the life of the school, She has an excellent knowledge of the subject and is constantly striving to move the subject forward. Links with the church and the community have improved considerably since the previous inspection. Church members are actively involved with the school in a number of ways. An example of this was 'Experience Easter' when interactive activities were planned by church members to help children and parents to think about the Easter story. A foundation governor commented that this had 'an amazing impact on the whole school community'.