



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Beckley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Street, Beckley, Oxford OX3 9UT

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 20 January 2015

Date of last inspection: 22 January 2010

School's unique reference number: 123175

Headteacher: Claire Bishop

Inspector's name and number: Robin Sharples 398

School context

Beckley is a rural school of 146 pupils in a village location with easy access to the Church building. The school's last Ofsted inspection was in 2009 when the school was judged as good overall. The school community is predominantly White British. The number of pupils with special needs has risen in recent years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Beckley CE VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Pupils demonstrate good relationships and learning behaviour and can reflect on this in terms of the schools Christian values.
- The members of the school staff form an effective and mutually supportive team with a strong Christian vision which is led effectively by the head teacher.
- All members of the school community work together to create a lively and engaging place to learn which values its Christian foundation and maintains its good level of progress and attainment.

Areas to improve

- Work with external agencies, such as the Diocese, to identify explicit links between values and their biblical/faith sources.
- Explore ways of developing worship so that both leadership and liturgical dimensions are enriched to improve participation for the whole community and make this part of a Worship Policy.
- Develop an agreed definition of spirituality which can then be used throughout the school to plan for and gauge spiritual development.

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

The Christian character of Beckley school forms a significant implicit context for the whole of the work of the school. The school's values are found across all aspects of school life. Attendance is good and parents, children and members of staff all speak of the importance of these values within the school's character. A learning environment has been created which results in good attainment and progress for children and regularly brings the Christian context to the fore. The values of the school are related to biblical and faith sources, notably the school prayer, through worship and at other times. These links are in the process of developing as the school moves from a values base built on 'Values Education' to an explicit basis in Christian values using the 'Values for Life' resource. This development is essential to the school's continued improvement as a church school especially in bringing out the explicit expression of these values and their biblical basis. The impact of this work on values is brought out in the words of a child, on seeing some fly-tipping, reported by a parent '*That is no way to treat God's beautiful world*'. Children understand the need to include action as a response to values. Behaviour and relationships in school bears this out as does the charity work undertaken by the school. This response is clearly appreciated as having a Christian origin or basis but children do not easily make explicit connections with biblical sources. Religious Education (RE) at Beckley plays an important part in the curriculum. Links are made with worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC). The introduction of the new curriculum has given opportunities to bring out SMSC across all subjects. These opportunities are being explored as the curriculum develops. A particularly lovely and effective example is the special box being used with early years children in which they collect things of special value to them and then use these as a basis for sharing with the other children. However, spiritual experience across the school is largely dependent on individual teachers' work; it is not consistent because the school has not established a common understanding of spirituality. RE also provides opportunities for children to encounter other faiths and beliefs; the impact of this is seen in the positive way in which children speak of aspects of world faiths other than Christianity. Ways to strengthen this, such as a pattern of visits to other places of worship, are being further explored. Christian understanding is enhanced by visits from the Barnabas team of the Bible Reading Fellowship; this makes themes and ideas in RE more vivid and intelligible to the children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Acts of collective worship form a central part of the school day. They have an important impact on the school as a whole and on the lives of the individuals within the community. The worship has tangible links with the worship of the church; several of the major festivals feature in the school's calendar. These have a valuable impact both in children's experience and as opportunities for the school community to gather together. Prayer is seen as a strength by the school and there are some beautiful examples of prayers written by children displayed in school. These prayers demonstrate a sense of development in understanding of prayer, the older children using more sophisticated language and ideas. Singing and music play an important role in worship. Children sing well and their experience is powerfully enhanced by the sensitive staff leadership of music, including the writing of a setting of the Lord's Prayer. Besides singing and prayer, worship includes a range of elements including specific biblical material and the participation of the clergy. It features regular references to Jesus but at present has only limited Trinitarian content due in part, to the limited use of the church year – for example the lack of Pentecost. There is some variety in worship, the contrast between whole school and class worship is particularly effective in promoting appropriate responses from the participants. Worship in church, which is usually centred on a particular occasion, gives children a further experience and is an important part of school life. Pupil leadership of worship is still in early stages of development but they do play important parts in worship and the school has worked hard to draw them into a pattern of evaluation. Parents appreciate the contribution of worship and the impact that it has on their children but there is a tendency to

see worship in terms of 'performance' rather than participation and experience. This provision is well received within the community but it is difficult to plan developments because the school does not have a distinct worship policy on which to base a review of current practice or a strategy for improvement.

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

Beckley CE school has maintained a rigorous approach to learning and progress since the last Ofsted inspection. The leadership team and governors strongly expressed their conviction that this aspect of the school is an essential part of the schools' mission. The headteacher has given a strong direction to the school based in both her personal vision and the school's Christian values. This provides a very good lead to the staff team. Governors are keen to identify strategies for the further development of the school which will enhance the school's Christian character. Work has begun with the introduction of Values for Life noted above and its impact so far has been good, there is tangible impact in the behaviour of children and their inclusion of values in discussion and prayer. The children respond well to their experience of school, which includes their learning and understanding of the role of faith. This is due to the good work of the school's leaders. While this work is recognised the Vision and Ethos statement speaks of a 'Christian context' but does not give any explicit biblical or church definition of this context. The school needs to look for further external support to bring further consistency to the structures and expression of the school's church centre and strengthen the Christian basis of the school's values. The focus for development from the previous inspection has been fully addressed; this is especially clear in the way that the school has maintained a good level of improvement since the last Ofsted. Governors also ensure that the school meets its statutory duties with respect to RE and Worship. The school's success as a church school can be seen in the number of teachers who have gone on to lead church schools. Parents speak very highly of the school and comment positively on the impact of the Christian Character, the relationships with the church and the relationships with the clergy. They are confident in the school and the way in which, through its Christian values and positive modelling, it gives their children an excellent start in their educational journey.

SIAMS REPORT January 2015 Beckley CE VC Primary School, Beckley Oxfordshire OX3 9UT