

**Grayswood, Church of England (VA), Infant School**

Lower Road  
Grayswood, Haslemere  
GU27 2DR

**Diocese of Guildford**

Local authority: Surrey  
Date of inspection: 21/05/2013  
Date of last inspection: 03/07/2008  
School's unique reference number: 125245  
Headteacher: Mrs S Bloomfield  
Inspector's name and number: Mr A Rickett (NSI 201)

**School context**

Grayswood is a smaller than average size infant school with 89 pupils in three class groups. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The number identified as having additional needs is broadly in line with the national average. Pupils enter the school with skills that are generally above national expectations. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2012.

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

Grayswood celebrates its Christian ethos through all aspects of the life of the school. An emphasis on 'loving one another', which forms the school ethos, underpins relationships throughout the school. This has created an environment in which pupils flourish in their learning and develop strong friendships. The school's leaders and managers constantly reflect on how the school can continue to improve the impact of its church ethos and character.

**Established strengths**

- An explicit emphasis on values that have Christian teaching at their heart.
- The quality of the opportunities for pupils to engage in spiritual experiences.
- The quality of the leadership of the headteacher and the strong support from staff and governors in taking forward the school's Christian vision.

**Focus for development**

- Ensure the school's Eco Forest School status reflects and supports the school's Christian character.
- Develop a more focussed evaluation of collective worship that involves staff, pupils and governors in monitoring its impact on their lives.

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

A significant contribution to the success of the school's Christian ethos is the fact that it is delivered in a way that is appropriate to the age range of the pupils in the school and that there are clear expectations of the impact of what the vision can achieve. The school uses language that the children can understand and relate to. For example, the school ethos, 'to love one another', is referred to when dealing with relationships and behaviour and is central to the golden rules. Pupils are very clear about this and know that it was Jesus who taught us to love one another. Pupils apply this ethos to life in the school. For example, when considering how to responsibly use the Secret Garden, pupils referred to the golden rules as a way to show care and consideration for one another. It is through examples such as this that the school's values of love, kindness and gentleness are explicitly Christian in their origin and lived out in the school day. These values are woven through the school's approach to teaching and learning and make an impact on pupil achievement through the care that teachers give to ensure that pupils make good progress. Pupils have many opportunities to

develop spiritually through time for reflection, using both the indoor and outside environment. The development of the Eco Forest School is an exciting time for the school. They are aware of the need to ensure that this opportunity enhances its Christian ethos and extends further the pupils' experiences to develop their spirituality. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. They are based on love for one another and characterised by mutual respect and consideration for the needs of others. Pupils have a good sense of right from wrong and are developing their understanding that they need to be responsible for their own actions. Pupils learn about other faiths and through their strong commitment to charitable giving are developing their knowledge and understanding of different cultures and traditions.

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

Collective worship has a very high profile in the life of the school. Pupils and their parents, as well as governors and staff, referred to collective worship throughout the inspection as an important way through which the school displays its Christian ethos and teaches them about Jesus. Acts of worship are well planned and focus on Bible stories and an understanding of the importance of Christian festivals. Pupils are, for example, aware of the meaning of Pentecost and are developing their understanding of the Trinity. The school has carefully thought about how they deliver messages in acts of worship and this is a key to their success. They make sure that they are delivered in simple language that young children can understand. For example, pupils may not have a complete understanding of the Trinity but they do know that God the Father created the world, that Jesus died for us and that the Holy Spirit 'helps us speak in lots of different languages'. Collective worship is outstanding because pupils have opportunities to reflect on how the stories that Jesus told can help teach us how to lead our lives. Pupils respond well to prayer and have a mature understanding that anyone can pray, whether they are a Christian or not, because 'God will still listen to them'. The introduction of a prayer tree in the hall and prayer boxes in each classroom has extended the opportunities that pupils have to pray at different times in the school day.

Regular feedback from pupils to the headteacher confirms that pupils enjoy worship and know that it is a special time in the school day. These findings and each term's worship themes are regularly reported back to governors. Evaluation of collective worship is good but does not focus on the impact of worship messages and their relevance to the pupils' lives. This is something that the school is aware of and is keen to develop. Collective worship, with pupils sitting in the round, is a time for the school to come together and remind itself of its mission to love one another and, as the pupils understand, as Jesus loves them.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Standards in religious education (RE) are consistently high across the age range and pupils make good progress. By the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 1 a significant number of pupils achieve above the national expectation for the subject. Pupils have an excellent understanding of Christianity and are developing their knowledge of a range of other religious faiths. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was of a high quality and never less than good. This consistency in the quality of teaching is reflected in the accurate monitoring of RE lessons by the RE coordinator. Robust lesson observations by the coordinator have identified areas for improvement that have further raised the overall quality of RE teaching throughout the school. Assessment procedures are excellent. Pupils' progress is individually tracked using regular assessment of learning in both their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Excellent practice is demonstrated through individual comments being made about the pupil's achievements in RE which inform teaching and learning. Lessons are well planned with opportunities for assessment and differentiated learning clearly identified. The school is currently exploring how to further develop effective assessment in the early years. The best examples of teaching and learning were seen when teachers challenged the pupils' perceptions through skilful questioning, to which they responded with enthusiasm and confidence. This was seen on a number of occasions during the inspection.

Religious education has a high profile within the school's curriculum. It is regarded as a core subject and from the next academic year, when the school introduces short termly reports to parents, RE will form part of this. Religious education has strong links to the school's collective worship and reinforces their golden rules and values. The RE coordinator, who is the headteacher, is excellent in this role. She has accurately identified priorities to take the subject forward and these are making a positive impact on the quality of RE throughout the

school. She is fully supported by the governor with responsibility for the subject who is both knowledgeable and committed to ensuring that RE remains at the centre of the school's curriculum.

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

The headteacher, although having been in post for a relatively short time, has encouraged different perspectives of what being a church school means, which have built on the existing strong foundations and have enhanced the impact of the Christian ethos. She has an excellent understanding of the purpose of being a church school and her vision is shared and understood by the staff and governing body. Procedures for evaluating the impact of the Christian ethos are very good. Leaders and managers make a valuable contribution to the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school and have a clear strategic understanding of how to continue to take the school forward. The holistic approach to the Christian ethos is reflected in the school's development planning through which the school's Christian aims and mission provide a running thread. This ensures that the school's values are an integral part of the pupils' achievement and well-being.

The local church is a key part of the life of the school. Pupils talk about the church as if it were part of the school itself and regard the vicar as another member of the school staff. The school's commitment to the church is evident through the involvement of the headteacher in the life of the parish and parochial church council as well as the links between the school's infant choir, Song Squad and the church choir at family services. The school has very positive links with the diocese and call on them for professional development and advice. The school makes a positive contribution to the local community and has developed strong links with services such as the community support police officer who is well known to the pupils.

Parents feel strongly that the school nurtures their children and encourages them to develop an 'open-minded' approach to matters of faith and belief from a strong position of being informed. The parents spoken to were particularly clear that the school's values and ethos creates 'a gentle and kind environment in which their children are allowed to develop as a whole child'.