



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ottershaw Church of England Infant School

Fletcher Close
Ottershaw
Chertsey
KT16 0JT

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Surrey

Date of inspection: 9 October 2014

Date of last inspection: November 2008

School's unique reference number: 125155

Headteacher: Mrs Jo Hastings

Inspector's name and number: Dr Glyn Willoughby 637

School context

Ottershaw is an average sized infant school serving the local community. It is federated with the adjoining junior school and shares a single governing body. An experienced headteacher has recently been appointed and leads both schools with the deputy headteacher. The large majority of children are of a white British heritage although a small number have English as an additional language. The proportion of children who trigger additional government funding and the proportion with different levels of special needs is lower than the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ottershaw Infant as a Church of England school are good

- The commitment of vicar, staff and governors to sustain the school's Christian ethos that is enriched by the enduring partnership with the church.
- The supportive teamwork and shared sense of purpose among all members of the school community to promote the personal, spiritual and academic achievement of each child.
- The way the children care and show Christian values towards each other.

Areas to improve

- Review the provision for spiritual development to embed its links with all areas of the curriculum.
- Provide opportunities for children to be involved in the planning and evaluation of worship in order to inform development planning.
- Develop the formal involvement of governors in the self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the school as a church school.

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

This is an inclusive and friendly school where relationships between children and staff are very

good. Children feel valued, enjoy coming to school and build trusting relationships. Christian values are implicit in the daily life of the school as can be seen in the strong sense of team work, sensitive handling of personnel issues and the way in which the school seeks to help others through charitable giving. A calm and purposeful atmosphere is evident throughout the school and this enables all children to respond positively to times of quiet reflection in worship and to challenging tasks in religious education.

Children respond positively to the quality of care shown by staff. As a result, they develop a concern to support and care for each other. The vicar highlights 'the way the children care for each other' and 'show Christian values for each other'. The resulting warm, nurturing relationships help them feel valued and this is having an increasingly positive impact upon their well-being and personal development. However the school cannot yet be judged good in meeting the needs of all learners until there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate accelerated academic progress.

This distinctive Christian ethos effectively contributes to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However governors are aware that the opportunities for, and impact of, the various opportunities for spiritual development have yet to be evaluated. The school plans to review this in order to explore links with all areas of the curriculum and therefore enhance opportunities for children to deepen their understanding.

Children recognise the importance of religious education to their lives. The interest shown as they studiously explored the similarities and differences between the ways that people of different religions pray, and in particular how Muslims pray, demonstrated the importance of the subject to them. It also showed their high regard for the value of prayer and confirms a growing understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and a respect for the diversity and difference within other faith communities.

The exploration of themes in religious education that challenge thinking, together with times for reflection in worship has a positive impact upon the school's Christian character and on children's spiritual and moral development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Children enjoy worship and regard it as an important occasion in the daily life of the school. The vicar makes a significant impact upon children's spirituality by her active involvement in planning and regular leading of worship. The worshipping life of the school is enriched because of the continuing conversation between the vicar and senior staff that results in opportunities to extend children's experiences.

The worship programme is well planned with a focus on the Christian calendar and festivals, with themes linking distinctive Christian values with Bible stories and teaching about the life of Jesus. Worship underpins the Christian ethos of the school because it allows children to explore and gain a growing understanding of the meaning of each Christian value and relate its practical meaning to their own lives. Recognition at 'celebration assemblies' for children who have lived out the meaning of a particular Christian value through their behaviour towards others, provides positive reinforcement for promoting the school's Christian ethos.

Worship to celebrate the main Christian festivals is led by the vicar and either held in school or at the local church. These occasions enable children to develop a growing understanding of church tradition and also of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They also give positive messages about the strong and deepening relationship that exists between church and school.

The worship observed confirmed the sense of belonging for all members of the school community. All staff attend worship thus demonstrating its importance within the life of the school. By entering quietly, attentively following the story of Jesus 'feeding the five thousand',

children were engaged throughout.

The opportunity to celebrate different cultures and faiths within the worship programme enables children to begin to grow an understanding of global communities as well as enhancing their spiritual and cultural development.

Although governors informally monitor the impact of worship, children do not yet have a role in its evaluation. The school plans to provide opportunities for them to be involved in the planning and evaluation of worship to obtain their views and ideas.

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

The headteacher, together with the deputy, have a clear vision of the way in which the school's distinctive Christian ethos enriches the experience of children. They identify the commitment and potential for staff to sustain this distinctiveness and in consultation with the governing body, are introducing a broader leadership team to enhance opportunities for professional development.

The deputy headteacher has ensured that changes in leadership since the previous inspection have not adversely affected the school's Christian ethos. Governors have worked hard to secure the school improvements that are now in place and are committed to developing the school's Christian character. They recognise the need to ensure these improvements are sustained through formal involvement in evaluating the effectiveness of the school as a church school as well as the impact upon children's personal development and academic achievement.

The vicar is highly regarded and respected by children and adults alike. Her pastoral care and commitment are deeply appreciated and she has been instrumental in developing the strong partnership between church and school. This was a focus arising from the previous inspection and is being effectively implemented.

The newly appointed co-ordinator for religious education has sound knowledge of the subject and effective plans for its development. With the continued support of the vicar, the leadership of worship has been effective in placing worship at the heart of school life and this has made a noticeable difference to the school ethos and children's well-being.

As well as the partnership with the Diocese and local church there are an increasing range of links between school, church and the wider community. The partnership with parents is very strong and those spoken to praised 'approachable and caring' staff who go 'beyond the call of duty' to support the children.

In a relatively short period of time the leadership has brought the school to a position where it has the capacity to build on its distinctive Christian character and through this to enhance the ability of children to fulfil their personal and academic potential.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.

SIAMS report, October 2014. Ottershaw Church of England Infant School,
Fletcher Close, Ottershaw, Chertsey, KT16 0JT