

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Leckhampton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hall Rd
Leckhampton,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL53 0HP

Diocese of Gloucester

Local Authority: Gloucestershire
Date of inspection: 1st February 2013
 Date of last inspection: 25th April 2008
 School's URN: 115667
 Name of Headteacher: Sam Porter
 SIAS Inspector NS268:Muriel Griffiths

Context

Leckhampton is a larger than average primary school of 422 pupils situated on the outskirts of Cheltenham. The school has significantly lower than the national average of ethnic minority pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also consistently below the national average. The school building provides an excellent learning environment and the attractive school grounds provide the children with outdoor learning opportunities as well as places for quiet reflection.

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

The headteacher's visionary leadership of Leckhampton VC Primary School characterises the outstanding nature of this Church of England Primary School. The Christian distinctiveness of the school is immediately evident through the excellent relationships which exist between all stakeholders. The foundation of these relationships is the Christian values which permeate the life of the school. The lives of the school and church communities are very well integrated. This has a positive impact on the children and all involved. There is a delightful family atmosphere that permeates the whole school.

Established strengths

- Children feel valued and special as a result of the excellent relationships within the school, which are based on the Christian values of respect, trust and compassion.
- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher, supported by her leadership team, in creating the school's distinctive Christian character.
- The secure and accepting ethos which gives children confidence to express their thoughts and opinions.

Focus for development

- Involve parents further in joining their children for worship.
- Offer opportunities for reflection and prayer time for staff.

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

Pupils feel valued and special as a result of the school's Christian character and unique as individuals because they are included, respected and make excellent progress. The school's motto, 'Open Hearts, Open Minds and Open Doors' is displayed throughout the school and the whole community is clearly aware of its importance and also the emphasis placed on the school's Christian values. These values are covered in depth through collective worship, as an integral part of the curriculum and are backed up by the example set by teachers and adults in school. The quality of relationships is excellent and is based on the Christian ethos of the school. There is a particularly strong ethos of caring for each other and children feel happy and secure in this environment. They describe the school as 'a massive family'. Children are respectful of one another and know that their views are listened to and acted upon appropriately. Pupils know that what they say will be valued by both peers and adults. This was evident in a religious education (RE) lesson observed on the day of the inspection, when older children, considering 'Life's Journey', thoughtfully discussed what Christians believe about what happens after death. The whole school community is involved in developing the Christian ethos. When the motto was introduced to the children and parents, there were opportunities for families to produce artwork to illustrate the motto which gave them insight into its meaning. The warm welcome given to visitors is a strong feature of the school's distinctive character. Children have many opportunities to learn to become responsible citizens. They help with the day to day running of their classrooms and in many other ways, such as members of the worship team, school councillors and young leaders in the playground. They are also involved in the school's development planning. Spiritual development is very effective because it is fully embedded in the school's daily life. There are many opportunities provided for pupils to be reflective both in the school environment and also through the curriculum. For example, every classroom has a reflective area and children have been helped in understanding how they can use these areas. As one child commented, 'everyone can learn how to connect with God'. Reflection is evident in lessons. This was seen during a lesson observed when younger children were making candles with Christian symbols for use in worship. Children keep 'reflection journals', in which they record their special thoughts and ideas. Behaviour amongst all groups of pupils is excellent and this can be attributed to the way in which everyone understands the Christian values and wishes to live by them. The current value, forgiveness, is clearly understood by children and as one explained, 'we all try to be forgiving towards one another'. The school environment celebrates Christian distinctiveness through many displays of symbols and children can explain the significance of these. They are also able to explain the meaning of the school logo which reminds everyone that Jesus said to the disciple, Peter, 'On this rock I will build my Church'. The school's values are evident to all visitors and children. Wall displays and interactive reflective areas are used regularly by the children, who are proud to describe their importance. Currently, one interactive table provides pupils with the opportunity to take a pebble and to think about saying sorry, thus complimenting the current value, forgiveness.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Whole school collective worship is central to the daily life of this school. Pupils are aware that it is a time in the day when everyone is together to worship God. Planning and enthusiastic presentation by both staff and pupils reflect the results of regular evaluation, assessment of completed questionnaires and discussions with children. Year 6 pupils keep a journal in which they record entries of what they have experienced in worship. One child wrote: 'I can reflect upon my values and how they affect my life'. Since the previous inspection, a worship team of Year 6 pupils has been established. They enjoy regular opportunities to plan and present worship as well as preparing a worship table with appropriate artefacts. On the day of the inspection, the team had chosen the story of Jesus meeting Zacchaeus to illustrate the value of forgiveness and had also chosen an appropriate song. They acted out the story and helped those listening to think about how there was a need for life changes after someone had done something wrong, as in the story of the tax collector, Zacchaeus. Consideration of pupils' comments ensures that collective worship remains relevant, inspiring and makes a real impact on the lives of the children as well as on their excellent spiritual and moral development. The whole school community appreciates the time to be together and to talk to God. Parents like opportunities to join their children for worship and would value more occasions to be with them for class worship. Children's understanding and participation in collective worship ensures a firm foundation of teaching Christian values in their lives and so makes an excellent contribution to their personal development. It is clear that worship inspires and encourages pupils and adults alike and staff would benefit from opportunities for times of quiet reflection for themselves. Since the previous inspection, governors are more involved in evaluation of collective worship and one governor attends school worship regularly in order to evaluate and discuss her thoughts with the staff and other governors. The vicar and curate regularly plan and lead worship and the children enjoy visits from the Open the Book Team. Visits from clergy and church members help children to get to know local Christians. Festivals in the Christian calendar are celebrated and the children of all ages are involved in planning worship. Parents especially appreciated the 'Welcome Service' for Reception children, which was held in church and led by the parish priest, curate and headteacher. The school's Prayer Network group offered prayers and readings and children were given talk-time bags, containing 3 stones of different textures. Parents and children were asked to use the stones as they reflected on the sort of day they had had. This service clearly helped parents and children to feel welcomed into the Leckhampton family. '

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

The inspirational leadership provided by the headteacher provides direction for the distinctive Christian character of the school. Her outstanding leadership has meant that the school's Christian vision has an increasing impact on the whole school community. This high quality leadership, together with that of governors and the senior leadership team, has meant that the Christian distinctiveness of the school has gone from strength to strength. The headteacher's spiritual leadership is strong, imaginative, creative and effective and ensures a permeating Christian ethos which is an outstanding feature of the school. The school reviewed its vision, values and aims following the appointment of the new headteacher in 2010, and this has recently been further reviewed by all stakeholders. Governors provide highly valued personal and professional support and challenge, strongly supporting the school's Christian character. The Christian vision is expressed both implicitly and explicitly throughout the life and work of the school. The mutually supportive relationship with the church is a significant help in maintaining the

school's Christian foundation. The church is often used as a teaching resource thereby helping pupils to understand the importance of this place of worship for Christians. The vicar, the curate and members of the parish church are involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school, such as by leading worship and planning the celebration of a range of festivals. The church leaders appropriately link their planning for school worship to plans for all age worship at St Peter's church. Religious education and collective worship are efficiently and enthusiastically led and contribute strongly to the school's Christian character and to the spiritual and moral development of children. The school feels that it is underpinned by prayer because of the regular meetings of the Prayer Network to support the school in prayer, made up of staff, parents and governors. There is a great commitment by the whole school community to ensure that the children have every opportunity to grow and develop into mature and caring young people.

SIAS report February 2013 Leckhampton CEVC Primary School Cheltenham GL53 0HP