



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### High Ash Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Pound Hill  
Great Brickhill  
Milton Keynes  
MK17 9AS

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Oxford Diocese**

Local authority: Buckinghamshire

Dates of inspection: 22 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 20 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 110419

Headteacher: Louise Eaton

Inspector's name and number: Sandra Symms 805

#### School context

High Ash Church of England (VC) Primary School is an average sized primary school with 269 pupils on roll. The proportion of children in receipt of additional funding and those with special educational needs is below average. The majority of pupils are White British. The deputy headteacher leads the school for three days a week whilst the headteacher works for the local authority.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of High Ash Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values linked to the growth mindset model of learning underpin all aspects of school life. This has a significant impact on pupil's good achievements and positive attitudes;
- Leaders make effective use of self-evaluation leading to focused development plans which maintain high standards and Christian distinctiveness;
- The strong community spirit together with committed staff, supportive parents and good church links lead to benefits for all learners;
- Relationships across the school are highly supportive and caring. This leads to high standards of behaviour for all learners.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop links with the global community to enhance existing local and national links so that pupils have a deeper understanding of their place in the world.
- Deepen pupil's understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith so that they develop a high degree of understanding and respect for diversity.

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

High Ash Church of England Primary School successfully lives out its vision of providing an environment underpinned by Christian values where everyone experiences the joy of learning. The values of love, faith and hope are firmly rooted in Bible stories and verses. Values are made explicit in all aspects of school life such as vibrant displays, the school website and newsletters. They link closely to the growth mindset model of learning. When challenges are met learners talk about not being able to do something 'yet'. They have faith in their own and others' abilities; they hope and aspire to be the best they can, all in a loving, supportive environment. Consequently the values have an impressive impact on the very good achievement and good attendance across the school. As a result of the strong, nurturing, inclusive Christian character where all God's children are valued, behaviour is of the highest standard. Parents talk about how the values help to develop healthy, optimistic and rounded children with a moral compass. Learners say that their values help them to behave well. They know that if necessary 'the teachers will help us to correct our mistakes but so will God'. Leaders speak about walking in one another's' footsteps and as a result forgiveness and reconciliation are at the heart of any rare behaviour issues. Learners say that caring staff are really good at planting the seed of being good friends. This leads to excellent relationships across the school community and a supportive, loving team spirit. The school definition of spirituality talks about learners being spiritual beings on a human journey. As a result learners have regular opportunities to express their spirituality. The journey begins in the reception class where children reflect on the wonders of God's creation such as 'amazing waterfalls made by God'. Older learners experience awe and wonder about creation when learning about space asking questions such as 'What is nothingness?' As a result spiritual development is at the heart of the curriculum. Learners are enthusiastic and feel challenged by the key questions in religious education. They have a sound understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith saying that you wouldn't know how to treat other people if you didn't learn about their beliefs. This learning now needs to be deepened so that there is a higher degree of understanding and respect for differences in our diverse society.

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

The school community places great value on collective worship. Parents say that worship is uplifting and fills them with hope and confidence for their children's future. Staff value the time for reflection and learners say that they are inspired to be a better person such as raising funds to help others. In the highly inclusive and inspirational collective worship, confidently led by children of all ages, learners reward one another's achievements linked to the values, such as 'having faith in themselves when facing a tricky problem'. One girl said that she likes the celebration assemblies because they inspire her to achieve what others have. Themes which link to the values and Bible verses such as 'Commit your works to the Lord and you will succeed' further inspire and challenge learners to aim high. Learners show an impressive understanding of Jesus. They say that Jesus is the light of the world; he sacrificed himself on the cross and came back to life. Learners show a developing and age appropriate understanding of the Trinity when they talk about Jesus being the Son of God but God in human form. One girl said, 'You can use the holy spirit inside you to help you to know what's right or wrong. It's like a part of God – he's watching over us'. Learners talk about prayer as a way to communicate with God. Year 6 pupils value the opportunity to pray for their school community at monthly prayer meetings involving all stakeholders. They say that through prayer God will give us help which will help us to help others, giving us hope. This shows an impressive understanding of the purpose of prayer. Monitoring and evaluation is managed efficiently with feedback from all stakeholders leading to improvements such as including a greeting and dismissal. This further strengthens Anglican practice which also includes using liturgical colours, lighting the candle, singing hymns and saying prayers. Worship follows Christian festivals and church seasons and is led and planned by staff, clergy, the Bridge Builder team and the children's Worship Council. A range of settings used for worship such as in school, the local church and outdoors result in all members of the school community enjoying a rich and inspirational worship experience.

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

The strong senior leadership team ably supported by governors consistently and conscientiously promotes the school's vision so that the school is constantly evolving and moving forward. Leaders readily and enthusiastically talk about the impact of the values on learners' behaviour and achievements. Governors say that learners demonstrate love by being good citizens, supporting one another in their learning and looking after one another such as Year 6 pupils taking on a pastoral role. Leaders and staff show abundant faith in learners to achieve their best, confident that learning will develop if they persevere. Self-evaluation is a strength of the school and involves all groups using various strategies such as data analysis, focused and thorough governor monitoring, pupil and parent surveys and staff consultation. As a result leaders know the school's strengths and are swift to close any gaps so that all learners benefit. Although there were no development points from the last inspection, insightful leadership led to the forming of The Worship Council so learners play a key role in planning, leading, evaluating and shaping worship for the future. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is informed by a distinctive Christian character and topics are selected thoughtfully. Subject leaders incorporate opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in all curriculum policies which further enriches learning. As a result SMSC is at the heart of the curriculum. Community links are strong with all stakeholders contributing fully to school life. Parents feel valued and appreciate events such as Father's Friday and Mother's Monday when they spend time with their children in school. This leads to effective links between school and home and as one parent said, 'When we work together we produce a rounded child'. Links with the local church and the wider community enhance learners' understanding of local and national communities. The school now needs to further develop global links so that understanding is deepened. Distributed leadership is used effectively to develop leaders of church schools. As a result of being responsible for the leadership of the school three days each week the deputy headteacher gains valuable experience in leading a church school. This benefits the head teacher who is confident that the school is in safe hands when she carries out her Christian duty to support other schools in the local authority. The incoming RE leader is well prepared to take over fully following a supportive and effective transition period including training from the diocese.