



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

### Ashleworth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Green  
Ashleworth  
Gloucestershire GL19 4HT

**Previous SIAS grade:** Good

**Current SIAMS grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 12 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 30 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 115663

Headteacher: Michelle Kelly

Inspector's name and number: Maria Wells NS793

#### School context

Ashleworth Primary is a smaller than average primary school with 29 pupils on roll. There are four pupils in Year Six; these are the first Year Six pupils since 2012. The school serves the village of Ashleworth and surrounding area. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to staff and the governing body. The headteacher has been in post since September 2013. She is also executive headteacher of another local maintained primary school; the two schools work together collaboratively.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ashleworth Primary as a Church of England school are good.

- A Christian ethos and nurturing environment result in a learning community focussed on the achievement and well being of all pupils.
- Christian values are rooted in scripture and have a positive impact upon the behaviours and relationships of the school community.
- The commitment of the headteacher, fully supported by governors, ensures that the development and strengthening of the Christian ethos has a high profile.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop a definition of spirituality that is understood by adults in order to provide further opportunities across the curriculum.
- Evaluate the impact of worship on pupils' lives in order to inform future planning
- Develop opportunities to provide pupils with an understanding of national and global communities so that they develop an appreciation of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

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

The warm, welcoming and nurturing environment at Ashleworth Primary school ensures that everyone feels cared for, valued and respected. The relationships between staff and pupils are loving and caring and shaped by the Christian character of the school. The recently reviewed behaviour policy links behaviour expectations to the Christian character and values of the school. It seeks to encourage a Christ-like attitude and reflects the guidance set out in the Church of England report 'Valuing All God's Children'. As a result, pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes to learning. Since its last inspection the school has established three core Christian values of Trust, Friendship and Perseverance. Pupils understand the values as being distinctively Christian and are able to relate them to stories in the Bible. Pupils also understand how the school's Christian values support their learning. For example, pupils talk about how they need to show perseverance when trying to learn new things. Pupils who have demonstrated one of the values are identified as 'Values Champions' and awarded a certificate during the Friday celebration worship. This helps them to understand how the Christian values impact on them as individuals. Christian values permeate learning across the curriculum and contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the pupils. For example, pupils were able to explore the time Jesus spent in the wilderness through analysing, interpreting and reflecting on a piece of art. Spirituality has been discussed amongst staff and the school is exploring with pupils what it means through projects such as 'Who am I? My spirit, my life'. The school development plan has a strong focus on developing spirituality and the religious education/worship lead describes the school as 'being on a journey, we're trying to help children to reflect'. However, as yet there is no clear definition of spirituality; therefore, spiritual development is not planned for across the curriculum. Religious education (RE) makes a positive contribution to the pupils' SMSC development. For example, whilst learning about what special things help people worship, pupils are encouraged to respect the opinions and beliefs of others.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Collective worship is an important part of daily life at Ashleworth school. Pupils are able to articulate the impact it has on their actions, behaviours and decisions. The values are explored through biblical stories; this helps the pupils understand the values as being distinctively Christian. The Trinity is always referred to when lighting a three wick candle during worship thus developing pupils' understanding; consequently, some pupils are able to articulate the idea of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Members of staff usually attend worship and comment that it impacts on their lives. One teacher commented, 'We use windows, mirrors and doors to help the children reflect, I often find I'm using it for myself'. One of the school council members has been identified as 'pupil worship lead' and she works with others to help to plan and lead worship. A lay member of church, and an Open the Book team also lead worship on a regular basis. This helps deepen the pupils' knowledge of Bible stories. Pupils' views of worship are regularly gathered and although the worship lead and governors monitor worship, this tends to focus on provision; as yet they do not evaluate the impact of worship on pupils' lives. A prayer is said at the end of the day, grace is said before lunch and a school prayer has been written collaboratively by pupils. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of the purpose of prayer. One pupil described prayer as 'speaking to God, which you can do anywhere and anytime'. Pupils would like somewhere in the school where they could be quiet and pray; the school has plans to develop a quiet outside area for this purpose. As a result of the consistent focus on Christian values, pupils are encouraged to take action in the service of others through fundraising activities for Children in Need and other charities chosen by the pupils. The school celebrates all major festivals at the church, which are planned together by the headteacher and a lay church member, who is also an associate governor. The pupils have thus developed an understanding of the seasons of the Church's year. Many local people attend these services even where they have no direct link with the school; this strengthens the

relationship between church, community and school.

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

The headteacher's strong leadership and personal vision for the school as a church school promotes an understanding of how distinctively Christian values make a difference to the well-being and learning of the pupils. She describes her personal vision as 'ensuring the absolute best for every child, developing a passion for learning through nurture and love and living out the Christian values of trust, friendship and perseverance'. This personal vision reflects the school vision which is clearly evident on the website and displayed in many areas around the school. As a result all stakeholders are able to articulate the vision in a common way. The headteacher is well supported by the governing body. Christian distinctiveness features as a priority on the school development plan. There is a named governor responsible for each aspect of the plan and governors monitor and evaluate the impact of the priority on developing church school distinctiveness. Thus, the headteacher and governors ensure that strengthening and developing the Christian ethos has a high profile. The school has also worked with the diocesan adviser on aspects of its plan and the headteacher and a governor attended diocesan training on leadership and management of a church school. As a result, the link between achievement and church school distinctiveness is being reviewed and consolidated. The RE/worship lead is well supported by the headteacher and governors in being able to fulfil her role; she has been able to attend an RE conference and is committed to implementing the improvements identified in the school development plan priority on church school distinctiveness. In-service training and close working with another local church school are promoting professional development of staff in terms of what it means to be a church school and supports their preparation for future leadership of church schools. Parents say that the Christian values impact on their children at school and home. They appreciate the impact which Christian values have on relationships within the school community, for example, the way they are able to approach staff at any time and enjoy the opportunities they have to join school celebrations of major festivals in the church. One parent commented that this helps the pupils see the link between school and the church and gives them an understanding of community. She also commented 'I'm really pleased that they get to learn the real reason we celebrate festivals such as Christmas'. Partnership with the local church and community are strong. However, the pupils' understanding of differing global faith communities and of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is less well developed. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.

SIAMS report February 2016, Ashleworth VC Primary School, Ashleworth GL19 4HT