



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Studham CofE Village School

Church Road, Studham, Dunstable LU6 2QD

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority: Central Bedfordshire

Dates of inspection: 11th March 2015

Date of last inspection: 16th November 2009

School's unique reference number: 109607

Headteacher: Paul Burrett

Inspector's name and number: Shirley Whales NS 830

School context

Studham CofE VC Lower School is a small, village school. The school is split into three classes; Reception, Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4. There is also an integrated pre-school. Pupils are from mainly White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional money known as 'Pupil Premium Funding' is broadly in line with the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. There has been an almost complete change in staff since the last inspection. Ofsted judged the school to be outstanding in November 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Studham CofE Lower School as a Church of England school are good.

- The strong leadership of the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, has been instrumental in developing the school's caring and inclusive Christian practices.
- Good quality religious education makes an important contribution to pupils' understanding of the school's Christian values.
- The commitment of the rector to the continued growth and partnership between the school and the church is contributing significantly to the spiritual, moral and social development of the community.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that procedures for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's Christian character give rise to an insightful and accurate identification of areas for school improvement and involve all members of the school community.
- Enrich learners' religious and cultural understanding through opportunities to explore diversity within Christianity as well as different religions and cultures, where possible through community links.
- Support pupils' spiritual development through increased involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship.

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

The distinctive Christian character at Studham CofE VC Lower school provides a good learning environment, based on Christian values, where pupils, 'feel well-cared for' and are 'confident to question prayerfully.' This means that pupils are able to learn about making informed choices in the context of the school's family atmosphere. Consequently, as confirmed by Ofsted and national data, pupils make very good progress and standards are high across the school for all groups of pupils and attendance is good. Displays, articulating the distinctiveness, are visual daily reminders that this is a church school. These support pupils' spiritual development and deepen their understanding of Christianity and the difference that it is making to their lives. 'Living our values is like walking hand in hand with Jesus'.

The school ensures that the Christian values permeate every part of school life. Pupils nominate others when the values are explicitly illustrated and all members of the community express the importance and effectiveness of the values on well-being, behaviour, achievement and relationships. Pupils are able to recall specific Bible stories and can relate some of them to their actions.

Some links have been made with different faith communities. Whilst pupils' understanding of the need to respect diversity is good, their cultural development and their knowledge of the Christian faith at a national and global level is less well developed. The school recognises the requirement to broaden pupils' understanding of other Christian traditions and provide more multicultural opportunities.

High quality religious education (RE) contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) and lessons are carefully planned to incorporate a range of learning styles and different abilities. Activities which allow pupils to reflect on the significance of their learning are not always identified and assessed and RE leaders see this as an area for development along with pupils' involvement in planning and evaluating worship. The intangible concept of spirituality is still recognised as an area for development especially with the very young pupils. School staff and the rector are engaged in this 'challenge'.

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

Collective worship is an inclusive and important part of school life. It is underpinned by the school's distinctively Christian values and the good relationships that are celebrated and secured. Pupils are able to articulate how the values support them in their daily lives: 'Jesus showed us the values and how to look after each other.' The biblical links are becoming more embedded and the school has plans to simplify them to make them age appropriate and more accessible for the pupils. Governors have recognised that 'since codifying the values, it gives everyone license to carry them across the curriculum- they are a constant reminder'.

Pupils enjoy and are engaged in worship, which is distinctly Christian; they especially appreciate the times when they are involved and are eager to take on more responsibility. Music is a strong feature of the school and it provides regular opportunities for the pupils to perform, for example collective worship at the Tree Cathedral in Whipsnade. Visits by ministers from other Christian traditions, such as the Salvation Army, are becoming more regular. This has helped pupils to make connections and identify features of Christian worship. The community particularly appreciates the contribution that the rector makes to the school. Parents mention the spontaneity of worship; the rector makes teaching about the Bible, the Christian faith and prayer 'very natural'. Pupils acknowledge the importance of prayer: 'prayers allow us to take time to thank Jesus' and they would like more opportunities to experience and contribute to reflection areas and to write and say their own prayers. Pupils have an age appropriate understanding of the Trinity; one pupil expressing it personally: 'it's like three parts of me; I am a brother, a son and a friend'.

Planning for worship, which is usually completed by school staff and the rector, takes into account the church year and is broadly based on Diocesan plans and the Christian value of the month. Most planning includes simple Christian rituals and symbolism, which has ensured that the recommendation from the previous inspection has been partially met. The rigorous evaluation of collective worship has yet to be formalised routinely and does not yet involve all members of the community.

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

The headteacher, school staff and governors are dedicated to providing a strong Christian vision, which has a good impact on the achievement and well-being of the school community. The Christian values which underpin the ethos of the school are becoming routinely embedded into the curriculum and daily life of the school and as a result, 'the language of the school has changed'. This clearly defined language is becoming more explicit in school documents and is supporting the school ethos.

School leaders articulate the impact of the school's Christian foundation very well for example as seen in the good opportunities for SMSC development provided through worship, in RE and more widely across the school. They recognise that Christian teaching, worship and the school's values help them to know what is right and wrong and behave accordingly. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and RE, which is treated as a core subject across the school. This effectively demonstrates its importance in the school. The RE leaders have a clear grasp and understanding of areas for development.

Parents say that they feel encouraged to become involved in the life of the school. They embrace the regular conversations with their children about the school values. Parents are able to explain the 'fundamental basics of being a church school' and how this impacts on their children's learning, behaviour and well-being.

There is a good relationship between the church and the school; this is exemplified by the influential qualities of the rector, who is 'a great resource' and 'special friend'; she knows the families well and offers good pastoral and professional support to the school. They also see the value and capacity of collaborative working with other schools in the Priory partnership.

Whilst the headteacher and governors have developed their leadership skills and have a good understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness, they also recognise that regular monitoring and feedback at governing body meetings would keep leaders aware of current developments and inform future planning. The school acknowledges that a systematic process of planning and evaluation by all members of the school community would enable them to share the responsibility for developing the school's Christian ethos.

SIAMS report March 2015 Studham CofE Voluntary Controlled Lower School, Studham, Dunstable LU6 2QD