

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

### Hope Brook Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road, Longhope, Gloucestershire, GL17 0LL

**Previous SIAS grade: Good**

**Current SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: Gloucester**

Local authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 29 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 7 June 2011

School's unique reference number: 109178

Headteacher: Stephanie Severn

Inspector's name and number: Daphne Spitzer NS 37

#### School context

Hope Brook Church of England Primary School serves the village of Longhope and surrounding rural areas. It has 117 children on roll arranged in 4 classes. It has recently been extended to include a pre-school setting. The majority of children are from white British heritage families. The numbers with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities are below average and those eligible to be in receipt of the pupil premium funding below average. Following the last inspection a vicar was appointed who has been ill for most of the period and the other foundation governor, as Licensed Lay Minister is fully occupied covering his role in the parish.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hope Brook VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The high quality of children's spiritual awareness promoted by the school's distinctive Christian character has a strong impact on their achievement and personal development
- The outstanding relationships promoted in particular by the school's Christian values of friendship and respect have a significant impact on children's personal and spiritual development
- The strong partnership between the church and school communities enriches the spiritual life of all involved

#### Areas to improve

- Share, articulate and embed the school's distinctively Christian values with the whole school community in order to increase understanding of their role in promoting children's academic achievement, personal and spiritual development.
- Develop a formalised system of monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness by governors in order to further develop the school's distinctive

#### Christian character

- Increase opportunities for children and staff to actively participate and engage in worship as well as develop their roles in planning and leading so that they develop a greater understanding and ownership of this important aspect of the school day

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

Hope Brook Church of England Primary School is a caring, inclusive and friendly Christian community where well established distinctively Christian values are having a good impact on children's academic achievement, personal and spiritual development. Children recognise that Christian values are important because they say they provide them with guidelines for their lives. Recently a core set of values has been chosen using views from all children. This has placed the value of respect at the heart of the life of the school. As a result, relationships at all levels and particularly between children are outstanding. This is evident in the way children talk with good understanding about the Christian value of friendship. They recognise the need for courage when making new friends as well as to trying out 'new things in your lessons'. Whilst older children recognise the role of Christian values in their lives in and out of school younger children mainly associate values with themes in worship, sometimes with a linked bible story. As a result, the school's values are not fully embedded in Christian teaching across the school. A wide variety of opportunities to promote spiritual awareness are embedded within the curriculum, often linked to the creative arts. For instance, a visit to a local quarry to find a 'place that represented their soul' had a significant impact. This was evident from a child's comment that his choice of a tangle of branches 'showed that I'm muddled up and tangled inside'. Religious education (RE) promotes the school's values very effectively. For example, an RE lesson focussing on the Christian values of trust and forgiveness enabled children to think very deeply about the consequences of losing trust within your family or a friendship. Children's responses such as 'it would be hard to trust anyone' and it would be 'hard ever to speak to them' again showed a highly mature understanding of the possible devastating life changing impact. This is an example of the excellent way the school promotes spirituality. The religious education curriculum also seeks to celebrate those whose faith or culture may be different from that of the school. For example, by termly focussed displays on other countries and by planned visits to local places of worship other than Christianity. In this way, the school is actively encouraging positive attitudes of acceptance and tolerance towards others, values which underpin British society.

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

Worship is distinctively Christian and of central importance in the daily life of the school. This is due to the very effective way that worship promotes distinctively Christian values. For instance, worship on the theme of the Christian value of trust was illustrated very well by the story of Mary trusting Jesus to turn water into wine at the wedding in Canaan. Spiritual development is promoted very well, for example, by the way that a key question is linked to the term's value, to deepen understanding beyond worship times. Prayers said by children during calm musical settings have a powerful impact. A central prayer station is well used by children and is an example of the way the school is promoting personal spirituality. Calm peaceful settings within classrooms enhance reflection times in which children can confidently share their feelings, worries and personal beliefs. Prayers at lunchtime and at the end of day often said spontaneously are also very effective in promoting this aspect of school life. Children are developing an understanding of Anglican practice from the changing of the coloured cloths representing the church seasons as well as the lit candle understood to symbolise the light of Christ. Children have been introduced to the Trinity from the special candle used at the weekly celebration worship. Class reflection times which include the passing of peace are a good example of Christian fellowship in action. Christian festivals are celebrated very well, often over a period of time such as the weekly services in school led by classes marking

Advent. The Open the Book team's visits complement worship themes, effectively enhancing children's enjoyment and understanding of Bible stories. Collective worship is very well led by the headteacher. Her planning is thorough and involves staff ensuring consistency of message which permeates the school day. However staff are not always present during worship which reduces its importance for them at a personal level. Children are involved with their classes in regularly planning and leading worship, though not as a small group alone. Their evaluations are valued and lead to development points for action, for example, the current request for more active participation. Despite the high status given to this aspect of the school day the school refers to this time as assembly instead of collective worship.

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

The commitment of the headteacher to the school's Christian vision is the driving force at the heart of the school's success and ongoing improvement as a church school. She is constantly leading the school in developing new initiatives to promote the school's Christian distinctiveness. A very effective sustained focus on the development of spiritual awareness is a good example of the progress made by the school since its last inspection. The school's chosen biblical verse to 'live in peace with each other' is clearly identified in the school's calm setting in which children value their class quiet reflection times. However, since the last inspection the church school's self-evaluation strategies and development plans have been led by the headteacher and RE subject leader with minimal formal input currently from governors. Parents are effectively involved in the self-evaluation process, as are children. They are exceptionally supportive of the school's distinctive Christian character, particularly the way it supports children and families in times of difficulties and bereavement. They appreciate being kept informed of the termly Christian values as well as weekly questions promoted in worship. However although children have been involved in selecting their core set of values this process has not formally been shared with parents or the local community. Religious education is very well led. Professional development has been very effective and subject leadership is of a high quality ensuring the subject takes a prominent role within the curriculum. Despite the absence of the vicar, the headteacher and two Licensed Lay Ministers linked to the school have done much to strengthen the existing strong church and school partnership. For example, by welcoming and leading school family services in church at the end of the school day, uniting the school and church communities. The school's innovative and original Remembrance Garden, which is continually evolving, has had a powerful spiritual impact as a focal point for the whole school and local community. This was evident last year when the local Remembrance Day service, held at the school, led by older children commemorated the fallen local heroes.

SIAMS report June 2016, Hope Brook C of E VC Primary School, Longhope, GL17 0LL