

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Jersey Street, Cheltenham, GL52 2JP

Diocese: Gloucester

Local Authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 13th July 2012

Date of last inspection: 31st January 2008

School's URN: 9163093

Name of co-headteachers: Alison Tugwell and Sally McMurray

Inspector: Margaret James (NS number 698)

Context

Holy Trinity is a one form entry Primary school situated in the centre of Cheltenham and its strapline is 'a village school in a town setting'. The school is led by two co-heads, both working part-time, who have worked together since September 2011. The number of pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals is below the national average as is the percentage of pupils with disabilities and/or special educational needs. The school is within walking distance of Trinity Church and has a close working partnership with several of the church teams.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school is outstanding

All stakeholders have a strong sense of the school's Christian foundation and an understanding of how this permeates practice, policy, behaviour and relationships. Christian values drive all that the school seeks to achieve and the resulting ethos of respect, care and the value of each individual are striking.

Established strengths

- Clarity of vision of the headteachers and their shared understanding of the meaning, both in theory and in practice, of what makes a distinctive church school
- Excellent systems of staff and governor monitoring of the school's distinctive Christian character which lead to improved outcomes for pupils
- Inclusive and creative approaches to teaching and learning
- Mature children who have a well embedded love of learning

Focus for development

- Involve parents and pupils in reviews of how Christian values impact on the life of the school
- Give all children the opportunity to be involved in the leadership and evaluation of collective worship
- Establish reflection areas in classrooms and shared spaces to further promote the school's distinctive Christian character and to encourage spiritual development

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

The school vision 'enjoy, achieve, belong', which is underpinned by Christian values, has a significant impact on all aspects of life and learning at Holy Trinity. All stakeholders know the vision and are able to apply it to their experiences within the school community. Children describe how Christian values have an impact on them during worship, at work and at play because they learn about them during collective worship as well as in lessons. They are also awarded certificates every week for living out the vision and values. A Year One child explained his understanding of respect saying 'it means caring for people and helping them out especially when their feelings have been hurt' adding that he knows this because of the way that teachers help them to learn about Christian values. Parents describe the impact of Christian values on the school community in terms of the individual care which they and their children receive as well as the impact which the values have on approaches to learning and development. Pupils are mature, reflective, independent, thoughtful and considerate. Through initiatives such as Playground Pals, Peer Mediators and the sponsorship of a child from Ecuador, pupils have a good understanding of their responsibilities as part of the school family as well as an understanding of their place and role in the global community. Relationships between all stakeholders are excellent. The school is viewed by all as a place where individuals are valued for who they are and where everyone is offered the opportunity for a fresh start. Policies, such as the Behaviour Policy, are rooted in Christian values and are implemented fairly and consistently across the school. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong, how and why the school community needs to work together and what their own responsibility is in this. The school vision is displayed prominently around the buildings. However, the school environment is not yet used to full effect to encourage spiritual development and to promote the school's distinctive Christian character although plans are already in place for improvements in this area. Religious education (RE) has a high profile within the school and makes a very good contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character. Because of the range of creative teaching strategies employed, children speak enthusiastically about the subject and their learning is highly effective.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The positive impact on pupils of worship is immediately evident when talking to even the youngest children who ably describe how the values 'help you know how things should be'. The school bases its acts of worship on the Values for Life materials and focuses on a different Christian value each term. These are firmly rooted in Bible stories and are well known by pupils, who articulate the difference the values make to the atmosphere in the school as well to their own attitudes and behaviour. Children who are members of the lunchtime club run by members of Trinity Church (Church Club) are able to help lead weekly acts of worship. All classes have an opportunity once a year to lead a class assembly based on one of the school's Christian values. This was seen on the day of the inspection when pupils, staff and parents were skilfully led in an exploration of the meaning of 'responsibility' by the Year 2 class. Not only was the value related to everyday experiences chosen by the children but it was also linked back to the story of Zaccheus who learned, through forgiveness, how to be responsible. All class teachers lead worship regularly. More pupils would like the opportunity to help lead worship on a weekly basis as it is seen as a positive part of the school day. All pupils express their enjoyment of collective worship; they describe how they enjoy the fun aspects of it as well as appreciating the prayers and times for quiet. Pupils are at times involved in evaluating the impact of collective

worship, although school leaders have not yet arrived at a system for doing this with which they are happy. In itself, this is indicative of staff commitment to investing time in meaningful actions which will have positive outcomes for pupils. The school council is involved in ongoing discussions with staff about this. Parents are welcomed into worship regularly and many attend these times. The main Christian festivals through the year are celebrated in the local church. Church leaders note the quality and integrity of the distinctive Christian message which staff and pupils communicate at these times. The school prayer (compiled from suggestions from all pupils) and the Lord's prayer are well known by pupils and are meaningfully used in worship.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding

The clarity and unity of the vision of the headteachers is outstanding. It is rooted in a secure Christian theology for education as well as in Christian values. Their work is driven by a passion for the continual development and improvement of the school and by a commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children and their families. All initiatives are underpinned by well thought out and systematic approaches to implementation, evaluation and review which ensure success. This multi-layered approach to leadership accounts for the progress which has been made in the past year in this highly distinctive church school. The vision of the headteachers is understood and shared by the governing body. They have effective systems to monitor all aspects of school life and monitoring Christian distinctiveness is central to this. The recently formed Ethos Committee leads the work in this area and all findings and actions are fed back to the full governing body. The school vision permeates all action points on the school development plan and features in all reviews of it. RE is very well led and managed. The subject leader has excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject. She is proactive and committed to raising standards. School leaders work to ensure the continued development of a cohesive staff team by including questions about Christian distinctiveness as part of the appointments' process. Relationships within the school community are excellent as are pupil behaviour and attitudes. Parents are extremely well informed about all aspects of school life and the school has plans to extend parental involvement in reviews of the school's Christian values. Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate the approachable nature of all members of staff and speak of the support which they receive as families. Parents, staff and governors meet together every term to pray for the school and view this as a priority. The relationship between the church and school is excellent. The church supports the school through prayer, maintenance projects, leading collective worship, offering pastoral care, sharing facilities and running school clubs. All of this work extends to pupils, their families and school staff.