



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

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

### The Ridgeway Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

West Street  
Childrey  
Wantage  
OX12 9UL

**Previous SIAMS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Oxford**

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Date of inspection: 24 June 2015

Date of last inspection: May 2010

School's unique reference number: 123151

Headteacher: Ruth Nye

Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby137

#### School context

The Ridgeway school serves the village of Childrey and other local villages. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. There have been recent changes in staffing and governance.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Ridgeway as a Church of England school are good

- The vision and commitment of the headteacher and governors continually develops the ethos and Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- The implicit Christian ethos, curriculum and worship have a significant impact on the academic and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development of children.
- The impact of the rector, community governor and 'Open the Book' team has increased the Biblical knowledge and the awareness of belonging to a wider worshipping community.

#### Areas to improve

- Identify, make explicit and celebrate the implicit Christian values that currently underpin the life of the school to fully articulate the Christian distinctiveness of the school. *We can now ground it.*
- Ensure that everyone understands the distinctive Christian foundation of the school by recognising the links between the identified core Christian values and their Biblical background.
- Further the spiritual journey of children by providing more opportunities to regularly plan, deliver and evaluate acts of worship.

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

The school has an inclusive and welcoming ethos that is securely underpinned by implicit Christian values. Although children talk about the core values in action in school, they do not readily relate these to the teachings of Jesus. Some are beginning to recognise links to Bible stories and the parables of Jesus, but this is at an early stage. The values of care, respect and perseverance are seen in the lives of everyone in school, resulting from a strong family atmosphere and good relationships. This is because the high expectations for everyone are known, shared and implemented. Christian values in action by adults ensure that the needs of each individual are recognised and nurtured to achieve potential. Respect and perseverance demonstrated by pupils supports their learning. This effective learning environment, rich curriculum and pupil tracking procedures result in almost all pupils making good progress. This enables them to reach above average levels of achievement. However, the size of cohorts makes data analysis difficult. The high levels of attendance reflect children's enjoyment of school and desire to learn. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is a strength of the school because of the ethos, cross-curricular links to worship and religious education (RE). Pupils' awareness of stewardship and sense of awe and wonder is seen in the popular environment and gardening clubs. Personal, social and health education is also a key part of SMSC, with opportunities for children to compare and contrast other cultures with their own. Children enjoy RE as an opportunity to explore Christianity and other major faiths through the questioning approach of the diocesan syllabus. This enables them to develop tolerance and respect for a diversity of faiths and begin to explore questions such as 'why do faiths follow sacred texts?' Their knowledge of the global nature of Christianity and other major faiths is furthered through links with schools in other countries as well as within the diocese. They also support a range of national and global charities reflecting their awareness of others less fortunate than themselves.

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

The school community enjoys collective worship as 'a time to start the day with prayer and worship.' Regular discussion between the headteacher and staff enables informed planning and evaluation of themes, with a focus on Christian values and Bible stories. Worship is supported by an effective policy, agreed by the governing body. Children experience a range of worship leaders, including staff, clergy and members of the church community. The input of the Rector and community governor has raised the profile of a Christian presence in the school and local community. This has created a heightened sense of belonging to a worshipping community which 'thinks about God' beyond the school. A child from each class brings a cross, candle and liturgical cloth to the hall to create the focus for worship that indicates a time of spiritual development. They understand that faith and life are linked. Pupils are developing an understanding of singing as praise and of Anglican worship through the worship led by the rector and governor. A weekly plan indicates a greeting, Bible reading, a hymn, prayer and dismissal that are explained to show relevance to daily life. Pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories from the Old and New Testament because of the effectively dramatized storytelling of the 'Open the Book' team. Children also have a growing knowledge of the Trinity, Christian symbols and their relevance. Children are familiar with different versions of the Lord's Prayer. They regularly write a range of prayers and are confident in speaking in school and church worship. Although they participate through readings and sharing prayers, they currently have limited opportunities to plan and lead acts of worship. In addition to informal comments by adults and children, the rector and other governors are involved in formal monitoring of worship that is shared with governors to inform development. Meetings between governors, the headteacher and diocesan advisor have identified a number of recommendations, many of which have been introduced into worship. The local church is used for festival services and presents children leaving the school with a Bible. The school also occasionally visits the Methodist church.

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

The headteacher and governors share a vision for the school, expressed in the statement 'to provide a caring and inclusive environment which promotes positive Christian values to enable all children to reach

their full potential.' Although they are also committed to the continuing development of the distinctive Christian character of the school, the ethos is currently based on implicit Christian values. Staff and governors recognise that the core values of care, respect and perseverance encompass other values, often referred to as the Christian ethos. However, specific Christian values and their biblical origins are not made explicit. Foundation governors carry out their statutory roles effectively and the whole of the governing body is aware of the distinctive Christian character and actively contribute to its development. For example, their awareness of a Christian point of view informs decision-making, policy review and evaluation against core values and targets. The new members of the governing body have undergone an induction period, with input from the chair of governors and the diocese to ensure that all can maintain the Christian ethos. The school development plan has a specific section relating to the school as a church school. The distinctive Christian character of the school is enhanced by the involvement of governors and church members in the daily life of the school. All are aware of the impact of the rector and the strength of links between the school and church. Self-evaluation as a church school is carried out by the head, rector and governors and is accurate. The developments from the previous inspection areas have been addressed. Other areas identified for development indicate that the school has a good capacity for future development. Parents are proud of the school and the impact of the school and church on the whole local community. They recognise that the staff display 'this is how we are in this community' by the way they live their lives. They also comment 'this school is well respected in the area and its reputation maintains the community by attracting new families to the area.' The work of the Parent Teacher Association organises events that involve the school, church and village communities. This is also reflected through the links with 'Little Ducks Pre-School' and the 'Education Open Day' in Childrey. The school is part of the local schools network that is currently being reorganised to ensure the continuing of shared development.

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