



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

<p>Ibstone Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Infant School Ibstone High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP14 3XZ Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding Current inspection grade: Outstanding Diocese: Oxford Local authority: Buckinghamshire Dates of inspection: 14 July 2016 Date of last inspection: 7 April 2011 School's unique reference number: 110464 Headteacher: Michelle Masters Inspector's name and number: Ian Lewis 629</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">School context</p> <p>Ibstone Infant School is a small rural school with 29 children currently on roll aged from 4 to 7 years. It serves the parish of Ibstone and also surrounding villages and towns. The majority of pupils are white British coming from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. A very strong and beneficial partnership has been established with the parish church's clergy and community. A new head teacher has recently been appointed who will take up post in September 2016</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ibstone CE Infant as a Church of England school are outstanding</p> <p>This is because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school has created and established an exceptionally strong and vibrant Christian ethos based on distinctly Christian values in which the children thrive both educationally and socially, developing confidence in their individual strengths and abilities • inspirational and strongly Christian leadership by the head teacher working in close partnership with dedicated and committed staff and foundation governors has enabled Ibstone Infant to flourish and develop as a distinctly Anglican school. • an extremely strong and beneficial partnership has been established with the parish church together with its clergy and community which further enhances the school's Christian character.
<p style="text-align: center;">Areas to improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to increase the children's understanding of Christianity in relationship to the other major faiths, devise strategies for good practitioners of those faiths to visit the school. • to develop children's deeper understanding of faith, implement strategies to ensure that thought provoking questions which will challenge children's thinking are used regularly in both RE and collective worship.

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

An exceptionally strong and vibrant Christian ethos is at the heart of Ibstone Infant School's entire life. It is firmly based on distinctly Christian values which are known and clearly lived by all in the school's community. This has resulted in a happy, mutually supportive school in which all strive to give of their best. The ethos is clearly visible in the behaviour and attitudes of the children who look after and support one another and care deeply for the world around them. Parents speak very warmly of this, lovingly describing the school as a 'close family where there is a clear focus on compassion'. Within this ethos pupils both progress and achieve well, this being clearly evidenced in the school's current data. Attendance is excellent and the children eagerly say that they thoroughly enjoy being at school and learning, 'It's fun and we learn good things' is a typical remark. The love and care evident throughout the school has resulted in the increased self-confidence of the children which is clearly evident when speaking with them. Discussion with staff, children, parents and governors together with observation during lessons and scrutiny of work gives clear evidence that the Christian values lived out by staff ensure that pupils with particular needs are given good, carefully planned and delivered support which enables them to achieve to the best of their individual abilities. Pupils know that they each have a voice and that they will be listened to. They share their thoughts and ideas in the knowledge that they will be treated with respect. Stakeholders are adamant that there is no bullying or aggression within the school. In the true spirit of 'Valuing All God's Children', all the children accept each other's differences and work closely together as a Christian community. 'They see no difference' is a typical comment by parents. RE and collective worship together with the strongly Christian spiritual, moral, social and cultural education given by the school play a very strong part in maintaining and continually developing the ethos through their focus on the Christian values. The pupils demonstrate in the course of discussion that they are fully aware that not everybody in the community will be a committed Christian but know that the values apply to all and the school's love and care extends to everybody regardless of their faith, if any. Parents describe how the school supports children and their families in any times of difficulty such as bereavement which, they say, illustrates the school's caring nature. The entire school has a palpable atmosphere of spirituality. Pupils enjoy quiet moments in the prayer corners, often carrying a 'prayer pebble' 'When you're lonely it's like carrying God', they explain. They are developing a good understanding of the purpose and nature of prayer saying 'We can speak to God to say 'thank you' and can ask Him for help when things go wrong' and hence their spiritual development is extremely strong. The children are developing a good understanding of the place occupied by Christianity in the world. Discussion gives clear evidence that they know it is a world faith and that Christians worship in different ways around the globe depending on their own cultures. Exceptionally strong links with the local community are resulting in the children's developing understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the wider community, parents saying how the school's values of care and compassion are taken by the children into the outside world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship occupies a place of extreme importance in the daily life of this school. It both affirms and strengthens the distinctly Christian values by which all within the school's community live. This is achieved through well-chosen stories and activities linked to the values which ensure that all feel warmly included regardless of their own faith, if any. Pupils in particular take a very active part in collective worship. All the children take it in turns to be one of a team of worship leaders who introduce each service and say the collect and prayers. This is clearly a role of great importance to them. 'It's a great feeling standing up in front of the school to say the collect' they say proudly. They also explain: 'We make prayers up about what we are thankful for and try to link it to the story and the song' they are very proud to wear a worship leaders' badge which is something they decided to implement. Worship clearly has an impact on each person's day, the children showing a growing understanding of tradition and practice. They talk excitedly and knowledgeably about it saying 'It's a time when we can all talk to God together and say our thanks.' The person of God as the Trinity features strongly in the school's worship and children are developing a good understanding of it appropriate to their age saying 'God is the planner, Jesus is the doer and the Holy Spirit is the helper'. Parents very enthusiastically speak of the impact of worship, saying the children talk at home about what they have been doing. They go on to say that they thoroughly enjoy joining in with worship themselves, particularly when it is held in the church. They also speak warmly of their children's understanding of Bible stories and prayer and of the way they enjoy singing hymns and songs from worship at home. Planning for collective worship, led

by the co-ordinator, is thorough and is principally based on the school's Christian values. The children play a significant part in the process through their ideas and feedback. Both the quality of provision in worship and its impact on the school's community is meticulously monitored and evaluated by the co-ordinator. Foundation governors attend whenever possible and give written evaluations of what they have experienced. This, together with feedback from all stakeholders, informs the next stages of planning including the school's overall development plan. The school has developed an extremely strong partnership with the parish church and particularly its clergy. Through the very active involvement of the vicar together with worship being held both at school and the church, the children are developing their understanding of Anglican practice.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education is viewed by the school as being of major importance within the overall curriculum. Through it, pupils clearly develop their understanding of the core Christian values which underpin the school's life. This is achieved through a focus on Biblical teaching, particularly that of Jesus Christ. The children clearly enjoy their RE lessons saying that they love finding out about Christianity and comparing it to other major faiths. This enjoyment was clearly evidenced in two outstanding RE lessons observed. Pupils are able to accurately recall prior learning and apply this to the current lesson. They take part confidently and show a high level of knowledge which they are keen to share. Teaching is outstanding, using a variety of approaches to excite the children's interest. Overall, questioning is well used to challenge and expand the children's thinking and they respond well to this with answers which show a mature level of reasoning for their age. However, these techniques need to be more consistently practised in order to further strengthen the children's understanding of faith. Thorough planning results in excellent coverage of the syllabus, the children demonstrating an outstanding depth of knowledge and understanding both in lessons and discussion. The quality of teaching and learning is very closely monitored and evaluated by the co-ordinator resulting in outstanding provision. Pupils achieve well in RE. This is evidenced in the school's detailed tracking of progress and attainment, employing the same system used for the other core subjects. This gives clear evidence that overall, the children are progressing and achieving better in RE than in the other subjects. Pupils gauge their own progress in RE through knowledge of the learning objectives followed by targeted questioning by the teacher which increases the children's confidence in their learning. The results of evaluations are recorded and shared with staff and governors. They then effectively inform planning at both classroom and whole school levels. The subject is very strongly led, the co-ordinator having excellent subject knowledge and being an outstanding practitioner. This has resulted in extremely good provision throughout the school.

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

The school's leaders and in particular the head teacher have created and established a clear vision for its life and future based on strong and distinctly Christian values. These are firmly based in Christian teaching, particularly that of Jesus Christ. The values are well promoted and are both known and lived by all in the school's community. The resulting ethos based on compassion and respect shapes the whole life of the school and is at the heart of development planning. The result is a framework within which the children flourish both academically and socially, evidenced in the school's records of progress and achievement. School leaders regularly and meticulously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's Christian character ensuring its continued development. Parents and children say that they are closely involved in this process. The parents in particular say that they are fully informed about school matters and their children's progress. The Anglican character of the school is a regular item on both governor and staff meeting agendas and is at the heart of all development planning. The school's leaders are acutely aware of the need for succession planning to maintain the school's ongoing Anglican character. This has been evident in the recent appointment of the new head teacher in which the entire process was driven by the school's Christian values. Leadership potential is clearly identified and is nurtured through targeted professional and personal development. Effective professional development has resulted in the exceptionally strong leadership of both RE and collective worship. This in turn has led to outstanding quality of provision and ongoing development. Provision in both RE and collective worship meet current national requirements. An exceptionally close partnership with the parish church and its community has resulted in a deeper strengthening of the school's Anglican character. Discussion with stakeholders gives evidence that through this the children are developing a good understanding of belonging to the wider community and of their roles and responsibilities as compassionate Christian citizens.