



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Longborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Longborough, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, GL56 0QD

Previous inspection grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 11 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 16 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 115632

Headteacher: Clare Fisher

Inspector's name and number: Stephanie Boulter 785

School context

Longborough VC Primary school is a smaller than average primary school situated in a rural village community. Pupils are grouped in two classes, one for Reception and Years One and Two, and one for Years Three, Four, Five and Six. The school is federated with another small village school and the headteacher is executive head at both schools. There are 38 pupils on roll the vast majority of whom are of white British heritage.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Longborough as a Church of England School are good

- The clear vision of the headteacher and the commitment of staff and governors ensure that all pupils are valued as unique individuals in the eyes of God
- The strong relationships between all members of the school community result in confident young people who think deeply about their place in the world and how their actions affect others
- The exceptionally strong links with the local church and the nature of the support provided are central to the work of the school

Areas to improve

- Further develop the informal monitoring and evaluation carried out by leaders and governors so that there is a regular cycle which analyses rigorously the impact of the school's distinctive Christian character on all aspects of school life
- Develop the role of pupils leading and planning collective worship in a variety of forms so that they can develop a greater understanding of prayer and reflection and how they can be used as part of their own spiritual journey through life
- Provide greater opportunities for challenge in religious education (RE) lessons so that pupils can evaluate and explore deeper questions and improve their higher order thinking skills

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

At Longborough VC Primary, Christian values are deeply embedded in the life of the school and are consistently lived out on a daily basis. These Christian values were chosen by the school community and form the focus for much of the collective worship, enabling both staff and pupils to discuss and reflect on them throughout the day. The result is that pupils readily link these values to Bible teachings and can explain what they mean to them and how they can use them in their daily lives. A key part of the school's Christian vision is based on 'love' and the well-being and nurturing of pupils as unique in the eyes of God. This inclusive approach ensures that pupils from all groups make good academic progress. Excellent relationships and behaviour are strengths of the school and are a direct consequence of the development of strong Christian values. Staff, parents and governors all acknowledge that pupils have a strong sense of caring for others, as one pupil stated, 'we give to others because we are following Jesus' commandments; some people aren't as lucky as us'. The school's definition of spirituality is understood by most adults so that teachers often plan for opportunities for pupils to develop their spirituality through most curriculum areas. Much thought is put into teaching pupils about a variety of faiths and cultures through RE and collective worship. As a result of these initiatives, pupils have a clear respect for diversity and difference in the world around them. Religious education is highly valued by all members of the school community. Pupils understand the importance of learning about religious differences, saying, 'we need to learn about the difference between religion because we should treat each other equally'. However, the level of challenge currently within RE lessons does not ensure that all learners progress well or develop good evaluation and higher order thinking skills as they move through the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils and adults know that collective worship is important in the life of the school and pupils describe 'how acts of worship help everyone to get on well together'. Pupils willingly take up opportunities to be involved in worship, where their personal spirituality is developed through reflection and prayer. Christian festivals are celebrated and appropriate themes are identified for worship in which links between the life and example of Jesus, the distinctive Christian values of the school and pupils' own lives are explored. As a result, pupils can describe how they try to improve things for other people, for example, in their charity work. Pupils have a developing understanding of the Trinity, and there are opportunities for pupils to write their own prayers and use reflection both inside and outside of the classroom. As a result, most pupils have a clear understanding of the many purposes of prayer, as one pupil confidently articulated, 'prayers help us when we are struggling by talking to God'. Whole school worship is supported by the local vicar and these occasions give positive messages about the strong relationship that exists between the church and school as well as providing a good understanding of Anglican traditions. The 'Open the Book' team is from the local village and further strengthens the school's place at the heart of their community. Informal feedback and evaluation help to improve the ongoing provision of collective worship. Class worship has been successfully introduced, giving pupils more opportunities to contribute to worship and prayers and gain a better understanding of how these and the school's distinctive Christian values can be used to help them in their everyday life. The school is aware of the need for more formal monitoring of the impact of worship, especially by the governors, and for the greater involvement of pupils in preparing and leading acts of worship more regularly.

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

Leaders have worked hard to achieve all the development points from the last inspection. Governors know the school extremely well, but the lack of robust formal monitoring of the impact of the school's Christian character, RE and collective worship means that sustained improvement is not embedded into the annual monitoring cycle. The headteacher consistently promotes the school's explicit Christian vision and effectively articulates her clear vision for

Longborough as a church school, describing it as a school with the church at its heart. This means there is a well-developed understanding of Christian distinctiveness right across the school community. Carefully targeted improvement plans which include raising the profile of interactive prayer and awareness of the school's Christian values in action, ensure that provision continues to grow in quality. Professional development of staff is good, with the result that members of staff are being effectively prepared as future leaders of church schools at all levels. Great emphasis is placed on caring for every individual with parents valuing the 'way that everyone looks out for each other'. Parents are proud of their school. RE meets statutory requirements as does collective worship. Links to the local church are an important aspect of school life and make a valued contribution to the spiritual life of the school. The headteacher, who is both RE and collective worship co-ordinator, has a good grasp of these areas of school life and of what needs to be done to improve them further. There are excellent relationships with the diocese, the wider community and other small church schools. As a result, partnerships are very effective and mutually supportive. The strong partnership between the leaders of the school, church and governing body signal that there is an excellent capacity to improve still further. The vicar and Open the Book team are regular visitors and are closely involved in reinforcing the school's Christian values. The school's values are shared with the local church community and the headteacher regularly attends parish council meetings.

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