



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Houghton on the Hill Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street
Houghton on the Hill, Leicestershire
LE7 9GD

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Leicester

Local authority: Leicestershire County Council

Dates of inspection: 24 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 9 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 120136

Headteacher: Jan Knox

Inspector's name and number: Wendy Wakefield 867

School context

Houghton on the Hill is a smaller than average size primary school with 175 pupils. The majority are White British. The proportion of children identified as having special educational needs and/or disability is low but there are a small number of children with particularly complex needs. Children currently transfer to the local high school at the end of Year 5. Whilst the school is currently maintained by the local authority, it works in alliance with the Oadby Learning Partnership and others within that group. Since the last inspection, staffing has remained stable and a new incumbent has taken up post.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Houghton on the Hill as a Church of England school are good

- The headteacher and governors have effectively promoted Christian values throughout the school creating a strong Christian ethos and an environment where pupils can relate these values to their learning and to their everyday lives
- The excellent partnerships with the church and community enrich the lives of all involved
- Christian values are at the heart of learning and an awareness of the needs of each unique pupil is bringing about improving academic standards
- Collective worship is inclusive and plays a central role in school life responding to the needs of the school and community

Areas to improve

- To increase the spiritual development of pupils through greater opportunities to regularly plan and deliver whole school acts of worship
- Extend the use of language and images linked to the Holy Trinity to support pupils in developing their understanding of this concept
- To develop formal systems for all leaders and governors to evaluate and monitor the Christian character of the school and to include all stakeholders in the monitoring of collective worship

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

This is a happy school, securely founded on Christian values. An 'El Salvador' cross, designed and made by the children, serves to welcome all visitors as they enter the school. This was hung in the local church over Easter to be shared with the wider community. Overarching Christian values including, kindness, faith and forgiveness lead to excellent relationships amongst staff, parents and children and provide a clear foundation for moral and social development. Staff recognise and celebrate the unique qualities of each child at school. Pupils with complex needs have been a target group for progress and analysis of data shows that gaps have narrowed as a result of effective interventions. The school offers good support to families when necessary. Pupils are encouraged to live out their Christian values by taking responsibility for their own work and behaviour and by caring for each other. For example, children in Year 5 have cleared a wooded area in the school grounds and are currently designing and building a prayer trail which is based on the school values. This will be a place for prayer and reflection which can be accessed by all members of the school community. One child commented: 'This will be our legacy as it is a quiet place where people can come and talk to God and ask for his help'. In addition, a 'values bear' is used to recognize 'Christian values in action' and is awarded by the children to those who have demonstrated values in 'real life' situations. One child commented 'It is really good to receive the bear because everybody knows that you are trying to live like Jesus wanted us to'. Children recognise the Christian aspect of kindness and relate it to their knowledge of the life of Jesus and the parable of the Good Samaritan. The children have a good knowledge of other faiths and communities which is reinforced by visits and visitors and by the wide-ranging RE curriculum that teaches children about festivals such as Divali and Eid. Consequently they understand that other faiths should be respected. Regardless of their own faith and belief, pupils develop a mature sense of spirituality. This nurtures their own spiritual journey and is evident in the wider curriculum. The creative curriculum and the extensive use of the outdoor learning environment has enabled the children to share in the awe and wonder of the world God created. Children enjoy all aspects of school and attendance is high. Because pupils are so well supported they are keen to come to school and thrive both socially and academically. Behaviour is generally very good and the school deals quickly and appropriately with occasions when behaviour is unacceptable and children say the approach is fair and works well.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is well planned by the headteacher who leads this area and themes explore current issues, Bible stories and Christian teachings. Pupils enjoy collective worship and comment enthusiastically about class assemblies and taking part in role play. Self-evaluation has recognised the need to provide further opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship more regularly. The programme for worship contributes effectively to pupils developing religious, spiritual and moral insights and is inclusive and central to the life of the school. Pupils and staff engage well and enjoy sharing the time together. The importance of worship in supporting the school's ethos is rightly recognised and celebrated by staff and pupils as well as by parents. Principal Christian festivals and special times in the church year such as Christmas and Easter are appropriately and enthusiastically observed. Parents attend class led worship in school and church based worship opportunities. These are rightly recognised as invaluable in extending and enhancing the school's worshipping and community life. Parents recognise that the opportunities to share in collective worship 'prove that Christianity is at the forefront and ensure that the school, church and community continue to work as one'. There is a worship and reflection area in each classroom where pupils share their own prayers or issues of concern to them. Prayer is becoming an increasingly important part of school life. Through worship, the children have developed an awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However the significance of this has not yet been made explicit and so their understanding of the Trinity and it's important to Christians is not yet established. Aspects of Anglican practice are evident

through, for example, the use of candles, reading from the Bible and saying the Lord's Prayer. Liturgical responses are used on a regular basis to open and close acts of worship within school. There is some evidence of the monitoring of collective worship by governors, but no formal evidence from other stakeholders.

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

The distinctive Christian vision is clearly evident and effectively promoted by the headteacher, governors and staff so that the school's Anglican foundation is celebrated. The school website features a text from the Bible: John 10:10 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full'. This fully supports the inclusive ethos of the school where leaders provide a wide range of opportunities to access a full and exciting curriculum based strongly on the teachings of Jesus. These opportunities have enabled pupils to flourish academically, emotionally and spiritually and to reach their potential. The modelling and embedding of values such as trust and kindness into the school community has further strengthened the ethos showing that Christian values underpin both policy and practice. The relationship with the local church is particularly good and the support of the proactive and committed incumbent is valued. Parents, staff and pupils speak highly of his involvement and ambition to work in partnership to improve the school. Communication with parents is good and they value the 'welcoming environment' where they feel staff are approachable and responsive to their needs. Parent views are sought through questionnaires and informal contact. Governors now play a greater part in school life and are confident about challenging as well as supporting leadership. The headteacher champions self-evaluation which leads directly into school improvement. This is shared with and analysed by governors and staff. In order to further improve, governors and leaders now need to take a more proactive role in evaluating the school as a church school. Leaders are well supported in their roles and have accessed training provided by the Diocese. Monitoring by the RE subject leader and governor monitoring of collective worship is evident. Provision for monitoring does not yet include the input of other stakeholders. Leadership across the school is characterised by honesty, and a genuine desire to improve. All issues from the previous inspection have been successfully met.