



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Crowmarsh Gifford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Old Reading Road
Crowmarsh Gifford
OX10 8EN

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 18/06/14

Date of last inspection: 18/09/08

School's unique reference number: 931320

Headteacher: Mrs Flora Barton

Inspector's name and number: Ms Lynne Thorogood (799)

School context

Crowmarsh C.E Primary School is a smaller-than-average village primary school. The children who attend are mainly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities and those receiving free school meals are below average. The school also has a small number of RAF children, from RAF Benson, who bring with them additional government funding known as Pupil Premium. Many pupils come from the catchment area of Crowmarsh Gifford and North Stoke, but a large percentage come from out of catchment.. A significant change since the last inspection is the appointment of a new head teacher in September 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Crowmarsh Gifford Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The conviction with which the school's clear Christian vision is promoted by senior leaders and governors, and shared by all members of the school, ensures the school's success in meeting the academic and spiritual needs of all pupils.
- Pupils' mature and in-depth understanding of the Christian values adopted by the school results in outstanding behaviour, attitudes and relationships within the school community.
- Strategic planning and decision making by leaders and managers are shared and corporate and are driven by the high moral and ethical standards embedded in the school's Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Develop environments or spaces in which pupils are able to spend time in prayer or reflection in order to provide enhanced opportunities for spiritual development.
- Widen pupils' experience of the Anglican tradition including the use of common texts in worship and common liturgical structure to deepen their understanding of Anglican distinctiveness.

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

The school's core Christian values, established since the last inspection, (faith, service, integrity, responsibility, truth and excellence) are evident all round the school and on documentation. They shape the thinking of the school and are understood, articulated and embraced by all members of the school community. Parents say that the head teacher makes very clear the Christian foundation and purpose of the school. They agree that, 'The school teaches our children good Christian principles, and they don't just say them, they live them out. They understand them better than some adults.' The school is highly effective in developing and expanding spiritual experiences that support learning and moral perspectives through social, moral, spiritual and cultural education (SMSC), religious education (RE) and worship. Outstanding teaching of RE that includes high quality questioning to promote mature reflection gives pupils insights into links between values lived out today and Bible teaching. As a result, behaviour is outstanding and the school rightly attributes this to the focus on Christian values. A governor explained, 'The children know that the adults in school have these values and it filters down to them.' A pupil commented, 'If you are having a disagreement, you remind people of the values, and you remind yourself. That makes you stop.' The Christian character of the school is clearly defined and promoted effectively so as to make a significant impact on the personal development and academic achievements of the children. It is also at the heart of all relationships. These strengths within the school's Christian character have been the foundation for its academic success. The school is highly effective in using data to track pupils' achievement and put in place intervention strategies to ensure they achieve challenging targets. Achievement of all groups of pupils is above average because the targeting of additional resources available for some groups is guided by the school values, leading to enhanced personal development as well as learning. Through a range of activities, including their link with a South African school children are made aware that Christianity is a global world faith. They understand the need to help others through their Christian service and the school's links with both local and national charities. The school is both distinctive in its Christian character and inclusive in its approach to diversity. This is a highly cohesive community in which all feel valued regardless of differences.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship sits at the centre of the school's daily life and has been further developed since the last inspection by the formation of the pupils' worship group, whose members are responsible not only for regularly preparing and leading worship but also evaluating it through regular pupil surveys and collecting the views of staff. These evaluations have led directly to new developments. For example in response to requests, the music leader has introduced a range of new worship songs more meaningful to the pupils. Pupils benefit from a varied experience of worship led by a range of people including local clergy. Worship is well planned and covers Christian themes with a strong emphasis on Christian values and on important Christian festivals. This enables children to have a good understanding of the nature of worship and the Christian faith. Bible readings are used during worship to compliment the moral theme of the service and this reinforces the link between the Christian message and pupils' everyday lives. The school prayer is used regularly and pupils have many opportunities to write their own prayers for use in worship and at other times during the school day. All know the Lord's prayer but many are not familiar with other common liturgical texts, which restricts their knowledge and understanding of the Anglican tradition. Most older pupils have an understanding of the Holy Trinity at an age-appropriate level, describing Father Son and Holy Spirit as a triangle or as like a three-part clover leaf. Pupils say they enjoy collective worship; indeed one parent reports that her six year old daughter claims it is the best part of the day. The vicar offers the church regularly each month for whole-school worship as well as for special services during the year and visits for RE lessons. Younger pupils enjoyed participating in a 'wedding ceremony' conducted by the vicar as part of their RE programme. This enhanced their understanding of the important place of the church in people's lives. Pupils say that using the church regularly has helped them to know more about the Christian faith and to recognise many of the Christian symbols such as the cross, the font and stained glass windows. Visits to the church have

made them reflect on their wish to have a quiet space in school for everyone where they could go to 'pray or be quiet', thus strengthening the parallels with church and school as complementary places of worship. There is often time set aside during collective worship for quiet personal reflection and prayer, which has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development.

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

School leaders have a very strong shared vision of how Christian values are central to the life of the school. The head teacher, supported by senior leaders, staff and governors strives to create an environment where Christian values are at the heart of leadership and decision making. For instance, the school welcomed the pre-school to share their premises because of a wish to forge closer links with local families, to be inclusive and welcoming and, in the words of the vicar, 'to create another bridge between church, school and community.' The impact of outstanding leadership and promotion of Christian values is also evident in the children's determination 'be the best you can be' and to reach or exceed their targets. Honesty and openness are evident throughout the school community. The impact of the vision is secured through excellent evaluation and careful and strategic planning, which is consistently aimed at continuous improvement. The governors play a key role in school, with links to classes and to subjects and making regular visits. They have a good understanding of the school's performance data because they have undertaken appropriate training courses. This leads to informed and supportive yet challenging contributions to the school's development. Work with other local schools and in-service training both from the diocese and at higher education establishments prepare staff well for current and future leadership roles. Training with a specific focus on RE, worship and on aspects of developing the Christian and pastoral ethos of the school has been provided for staff at all levels including teaching assistants. The significant expenditure on this training affirms the importance of these aspects of distinctiveness in the eyes of school leaders and ensures all members of staff share a corporate understanding of the school's mission. Partnerships with the church family, parents and the local and wider communities are strong, vibrant and open. Many parents are committed to the school's Church of England foundation. All those interviewed hold the Christian status of the school in high esteem and summed up their feelings with a range of comments: 'This is a very community based school'; 'If you want a well-rounded child, then this is the school to choose.'; 'At Crowmarsh Gifford, everyone goes the extra mile.'

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