



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Goring Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wallingford Road, Goring-on-Thames,

Reading,

RG8 0BG

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 21 October 2014

Date of last inspection: 9 December 2009

School's unique reference number: 123201

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Wheatcroft

Inspector's name and number: The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598

School context

Goring is a slightly smaller than average semi-rural school of 240 pupils close to Reading. The school is often oversubscribed. The numbers of pupils eligible for additional government funding through the Pupil Premium are well below the national average. The local parish priest is new in post.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Goring Primary as a Church of England school are good because

- The inclusion of children of all faiths, social backgrounds, abilities and social need results in a generous and understanding Christian community where children, governors and staff demonstrate great compassion and empathy for others.
- The clear personal Christian motivation in the exercise of leadership by the headteacher results in a secure dedication at all levels of the school community to a Christian learning environment where pupils work towards attaining their academic and social potential.
- The committed and capable governing body asks appropriately challenging questions that results in effective monitoring and evaluation to ever move the school towards excellence in the church school aspect and in its wider effectiveness.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all stakeholders can articulate the Christian values of the school in decision making, policy, practice and pupil outcomes and regularly evaluate the impact of the values.
- Ensure that the most effective practice in Religious Education (RE) in creativity, pupil engagement and recording of learning is modelled and evaluated widely across the school.

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

The school is committed to a Christian learning environment. It draws on a large range of Christian values arising from its collective worship which shapes reflection and practice in school. However, the school is not yet outstanding because the Christian values considered are too diverse and change termly. This means that they do not become deeply embedded across all aspects of school life or inform pupils' thinking beyond their focus term. It also means stakeholders cannot clearly articulate the values that are important to the school and explain how they influence policy and practice. The diverse Christian values utilized by the school are sufficient to cumulatively create a secure, safe and Christian environment. As a result children develop positive self-esteem and flourish as confident caring people with a generosity of spirit. Skilled staff ensure that there is a calm but clear and firm understanding of what is right and wrong in this school. Pupils are taught to care for one another which is well modelled by caring staff with high expectations. As a result, behaviour in the school is good and is often outstanding. However, pupils make insufficient links for themselves between their behaviour choices and the school's Christian values because these values are not clearly articulated on a regular basis and are not embedded because they are too variable. The school demonstrates its Christian approach in that it is highly inclusive and serves all children well that are brought into its care. Consequently, each child of whatever background and faith is welcomed, supported, cared for and challenged to reach their potential. There is a systematic approach to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils which is good and ensures the all-round development of children. This also instils a respect for differing traditions. Pupil empathy and compassion is a strength of this school. These are enhanced by the school's global awareness weeks and links with a Methodist school in Sierra Leone that includes praying for them during the ongoing Ebola crisis. These links also help pupils to see Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. The communications between the two schools develops an awareness that this is not just a charitable endeavour but one where each Christian community is equally responsible for the other as part of the worldwide Christian family. The school is proud of its eco school green flag and its associated work which, with appropriate Christian underpinning, has helped pupils recognize their responsibility to enjoy and guard the natural environment as a gift from God. The Christian ethos of the school provides a strong base for pupil achievement so that results are above national averages in all core subjects and progress is generally good. Attendance and punctuality are good and Christian care is given appropriately to support the high attendance of all. The positive relationships between the church and school can largely be attributed to the Christian leadership and influence of the headteacher and of dedicated clergy past and present. These beneficial links secure the school's understanding of itself as a compassionate Christian community serving Goring-on-Thames.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is a significant part of the heartbeat of this school because it is given prominence and well led by the headteacher who also models effective practice. The school utilizes the God's Story Teller approach to great effect which inspires, interests and prospers a range of Christian values such as appreciation and beauty for this term and grounds them in Biblical example. Collective worship is well planned with a range of people and frequently includes local Anglican and free church clergy to support the planning and leading of acts of worship in the God's Story Teller model. However, this approach limits the opportunity for pupils to become confident and frequent planners and leaders of collective worship themselves and to prosper the articulation of some core Christian values that are important to the school. This is why collective worship is not yet outstanding. Prayer is a strong feature of collective worship supported by the pupils' prayer box that helps pupils see the significance of prayer for their lives. There is a growing awareness of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christianity and of the Anglican tradition because these are considered in collective worship. This helps pupils to grow in their understanding of Christianity. Collective worship is evaluated by staff and pupils and issues responded to appropriately. This ensures collective worship continues to evolve and meet the spiritual needs of all members of the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The RE curriculum is generally creative and interesting which results in positive responses and attitudes from the children. It is not yet outstanding because the best practice that engages pupils and captures their higher

order learning is not consistent across all lessons and in all books. The curriculum increasingly arises from key questions drawn from the new local authority agreed RE syllabus helping pupils to consider key concepts from religions at a high level and to make applications to their own lives and beliefs. Pupils develop a good understanding of the Christian tradition for example in topics on comparing parables in the four gospels, the Lindisfarne Gospels and interviewing religious believers on the importance of the Bible in their lives. Pupils also develop a wider awareness of religious belief and practice through well considered and resourced topics on Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, for example the recent year 6 topic on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Pupils especially appreciate visits to places of worship such as the Synagogue and Christchurch Cathedral because it makes the learning 'real' to them. RE in the foundation stage has a high profile for example the recent role play areas for the Jewish festival of Sukkot and is a strength of RE at the school. This ensures pupils have a positive regard for RE from their earliest days and see its importance in the life of the school. RE is well led by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader who together with senior leaders ensures the subject is appropriately monitored and progress tracked. This results in pupils attaining and achieving in line with other subjects and teaching that is good. This progress is supported by effective marking and the learning conversations that arise.

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

Governors monitor and evaluate the church school aspect through close involvement in the life of the school and by asking appropriately challenging questions. The SIAMS committee is effective in reporting the work of the school with regard to the church school aspect and shows the dedication of the governing body to the school's church aided status. The school is not yet outstanding because the governing body and school have not yet enabled the clear articulation of some core Christian values so that they are deeply embedded in policy and practice and inform decision making at the strategic level. The school plans well for succession because it invests in quality staff development that is considered exemplary by the local authority. The governing body are working strategically to ensure the future of the school and effective succession planning. The school has made appropriate progress towards meeting the development points from the last inspection improving pupils' global awareness as a result. Statutory requirements are met. The school's Christian purpose results in good outcomes in terms of attainment, attendance, spiritual development, relationships and a distinctive curriculum that gives appropriate status to RE. The school is well led by the headteacher whose Christian leadership is rightly held in high regard by the parents and governors. Through her Christian leadership a strong sense of commitment, compassion and generosity of spirit is developed at all levels of the school and with the local community. This school makes an important contribution to community cohesion as it develops compassion, empathy and multi-cultural understanding and appreciation. Parents feel sufficiently consulted and involved in the life of the school and rightly have a high opinion of this compassionate and joyful Christian school as a result.