



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Madresfield Voluntary Aided Primary School

40 Madresfield Village, Malvern. WR13 5AA

Previous inspection grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 6 July 2016

Date of last inspection: 19 July 2011

School's unique reference number: 116898

Headteacher: Julie Greenwood

Inspector's name and number: C. Ann Stone NS812

School context

Madresfield VA Primary School is situated in a rural location. It has 103 pupils on roll with a large proportion living outside the catchment area. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage and, apart from Year 6, are taught in mixed year classes. The number of children entitled to Pupil Premium and those with special educational needs is above national average. The parish church of St Mary the Virgin is a short walk away.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Madresfield VA Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- The ability of all stakeholders to articulate and promote a vision for the school which is rooted in Christian values results in every child feeling valued.
- The religious education lessons challenge children to think for themselves leading to good spiritual, moral and social development.
- The inspirational headteacher has a clear vision and strategy for moving the school forward as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that learning about Christianity as a world faith is incorporated into religious education so that children develop a respect for diversity and difference.
- Formalise the evaluation of collective worship in order to ensure that children and governors are fully involved in the process.
- Further develop the interpretation of spirituality, so that children are engaged in a range of spiritual experiences across the whole school curriculum allowing them to deepen their own personal spirituality.

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

Christian values permeate the whole life of the school and create an ethos that enables children to achieve well. Vulnerable children are particularly nurtured carefully with initiatives that demonstrate the Christian values of care and compassion. The behaviour of the children is of the highest standard and relationships are consistently attributed to the Christian nature of the school. The new school strap line of 'Caring and Challenging' is clearly understood and articulated by all stakeholders and children are able to link this to God caring for them. The relationship between local community, parish church and school is very strong and is characterised by mutual respect and a genuine sense of community. Children understand the need of, and have the ability to put others before themselves. Fundraising supports local, national and global challenges. Children from Chenobyl in Russia visited the school and fundraising for Masari school, Tanzania, has resulted in children appreciating and respecting global diversity. In all these ways, the Christian character of the school has an impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children. Children have little understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith and this is highlighted as an area for development. Parents and governors comment that they are welcomed into school and consider themselves to be an intrinsic part of the school community. Christian values and Bible stories are regularly discussed at home and parents believe this can be directly attributed to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. An example given was, when discussing Christmas presents, a child 'didn't want anything for Christmas – just wanted it to be family orientated'. Following training, staff and governors have a clear understanding of spirituality and how it can be linked to all areas of school life. Not yet embedded is the provision of spiritual experiences within the curriculum to enable children to make their own links between beliefs, practices and Christian values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective worship is important to the life of the school and is seen to contribute and support the school's Christian distinctiveness. It is planned using 'Roots and Fruits' and incorporates Christian values, Bible stories, music, reflection time and prayer which lead to a rich and diverse experience of worship. 'Open the Book' worship, led by members of the church and assisted by children, is well received and has a direct impact on the life of the children. The parish priest and other staff members regularly deliver worship. The worship committee, made up of the headteacher, children and church members has a major role in the development of worship. The views and ideas of children are incorporated into the planning of all church services resulting in children feeling they have ownership of these services. All classrooms have a 'reflection area' with opportunities for children to write prayers and reflect on important aspects of their lives. An example seen was a collection of photographs of deceased family members. Children were confident at explaining the importance of remembering, celebrating their lives and acknowledging they were now with God. Children can talk about areas outside the school building where they go to reflect and give thanks for God's wonderful world ensuring that worship extends beyond a set time and place. Informal feedback by children, governors and staff occurs but the lack of formal systems of evaluation means that improvement is limited and this has been identified as an area for development. Children have a clear understanding of prayer. The 'Lord's Prayer' and learning about Jesus Christ enable children to make a link between the Bible and lessons for their own lives. Yet to be developed is a clearer understanding of the Trinity and the Eucharist. Parents are invited to church services and see messages from worship played out in the behaviour of children at home, for example saying a prayer before mealtimes. Celebration worship acknowledges the achievements of all and reinforces the Christian values needed to achieve. Symbolic artefacts are displayed around school and children can articulate what they mean to Christians.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

The school has clearly acknowledged the importance of religious education (RE) and it now has a high profile within the curriculum following the decision to timetable weekly lessons rather than as a topic block. It is recognised by staff, governors and children as being important to the life of the school. Children enjoy their lessons and are able to link their learning to how they should live their lives. Parents remark how often children talk about their RE lessons and want to explore their learning further at home. The RE coordinator is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and attends diocesan training regularly. She ensures standards are high, lessons challenging and passes training on to staff when appropriate. Staff plan RE lessons which allow children the opportunity to reflect, ask questions, offer opinions and help understand the impact religion has on believers. Children actively engage in their learning and recognise it contributes to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Their understanding of Christianity is secure but identified is the need to develop their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith. Opportunities are given for children to learn about other faiths through sharing experiences, direct teaching and visits to other places of worship. As a result, children's knowledge and understanding of cultures and faiths which are different to their own is of a high standard. Progress and achievement of all children in RE is tracked and evidence shows that the majority of children are working at age related expectations. Not yet secure are systems which enable assessment information to inform future planning, teaching and learning. Governors are involved in monitoring and evaluation of RE and are regularly informed of any developments through reports at meetings and informal feedback by the RE coordinator.

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

The headteacher is an inspirational leader who articulates well the newly introduced school vision, which was created through discussion with all stakeholders. She is working to ensure this vision becomes embedded into the Christian values already recognised by all at Madresfield VA Primary School. The headteacher shows a strong commitment to the pastoral care of all staff by ensuring they have manageable and achievable targets. Governors know the school and articulate well the understanding of their role as strategic leaders of a church school. They are an intrinsic part of school life, often involved in outings, informal visits, fundraising and community events. An example of this was their involvement in a whole school trip to Wales. Children know their governors and governors state that it is important that 'small voices get listened to'. The local private nursery and Madresfield Estate contribute to school life with the result that there is mutual and substantial benefit to both thereby strengthening the links between the school and local community. For example, the estate provides a walking bus car park and use of the estate grounds which links well to the social development of the children. Parents know their concerns are dealt with efficiently and sensitively and link this to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. A well established 'Friends Association' volunteer their time and talents as well as giving financial support to the school enabling the parents to become totally involved in the life of a church school. The area for development from the previous inspection for a wider involvement of governors and staff in leadership and management has led to the formation of a 'Church School Link' committee. This has resulted in regular contact between foundation governors and school, regular evaluation of the Christian distinctiveness and more opportunities to consider the development of the school as a church school. Leaders and governors ensure both worship and religious education meet statutory requirements. The supportive relationships between all members of the school community are clearly rooted in Christian values, providing a school which is both distinctive and highly effective.