



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Ann Edwards Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Berkeley Close, South Cerney, Cirencester

Gloucestershire GL7 5UW

**Previous SIAS grade: Good**

**Current SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: Gloucester**

Local authority: Gloucester

Date of inspection: 13 July 2016

Date of last inspection: 23 June 2011

School's unique reference number: 115677

Headteacher: Helen Sowden

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

#### **School context**

Ann Edwards is a slightly larger than average size rural primary school with 295 children. They come from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds and the majority are from a white British heritage. Mobility is high. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average as is the number receiving pupil premium support. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The school has experienced significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2014.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ann Edwards Church of England School as a Church of England school are good**

- Christian values make a difference to the quality of relationships throughout the school community and underpin the care and nurture given to meet the needs of all children.
- Acts of worship make an important contribution to the children's understanding of Christian values and their links to Bible stories.
- The commitment of the headteacher and other school leaders has ensured that the school has moved forward as a church school in the last two years.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Create innovative opportunities for children to lead their own spiritual development so that it has greater relevance to their own lives.
- Develop the role of children in leading collective worship so that they have more involvement in how worship messages are explored.
- Ensure that there is greater consistency in identifying opportunities for spiritual development across the school by involving the whole school community in developing their shared understanding of spirituality.

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

An important aspect of the impact of the school's Christian ethos is the extent to which the school has responded to meet the needs of different groups of children. For example, the development of links with the nearby military base is supporting children and their families with deployment and the transition from one school to another. Similarly, the creation of a nurture room in 2014 to provide for vulnerable children was supported by training for staff and the appointment of a families' liaison officer. These are direct examples of how the school lives out its vision to 'learn together in a caring community'. Underpinning this vision is a set of twelve values that have their roots in biblical teaching. The recent completion of a set of mosaics represents the children's interpretation of each value and, in many cases, shows how children link them to the Bible and the Christian life of the school. The school environment provides good opportunities for children to have time and space to reflect in the school day. There are reflection areas around the school which children say they use to be still and calm. The SARA garden is used in a similar way by children who value the chance to be quiet. They say that these times give them the chance to think about their concerns or sometimes simply to 'put the world to one side and think'. The school is developing its shared understanding of spirituality and has been supporting children to help them reflect. There are fewer opportunities for children to direct how they want to respond and explore their own spirituality. Religious education (RE) makes a valuable contribution to the children's growing appreciation of Christianity and other world religions. They know that they should show respect and tolerance to all faiths and that it is important to 'treat everyone as equals'. Adults reinforce these values in the way that they help children respond to times when they may fall out with friends. Relationships in the school are excellent and children, when given the opportunity to discuss matters of faith and belief, do so with considerable insight. They engage in conversation with excitement and a real delight to grapple with difficult abstract concepts.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Acts of worship are good because they are the main way through which children develop an understanding that core values are underpinned by biblical teaching. Planning for worship is based around core values with a focus each term that allows for them to be explored in depth. Children know that the values help them to be better people and 'to be kind to each other'. Younger children, for example, explain that wisdom helps them to 'make the right choices' and that 'Jesus is a leader who teaches us the values'. They explain how they ought to try and 'follow' the values in their own lives both in school and outside of it but admit that they can 'sometimes be a bit tricky to do'. There are good opportunities for children to pray in the school day. They respond well to prayer with an appropriate reverence. Older children understand that not everyone in the school may 'believe in prayer' but that everyone has to show 'respect' when they do pray as a school. Children have a good understanding of the purpose of prayer. They say that prayer is not a wish list but can give you hope in times of trouble. Children naturally refer to God as Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit when they talk about prayer. They are confident to share their thoughts on the Trinity and to admit that it is a mystery that they cannot explain. They do possess the language to help them explore the mystery of the Trinity and to make connections between the Holy Spirit, a person's soul and heaven. Children are keen to participate in collective worship. They are more involved in the regular evaluation of worship which is used to consider improvements. Children are beginning to be involved in planning and leading worship and to have greater ownership of how themes from worship are explored across each term. Acts of worship have distinct elements that make them explicitly Anglican in character.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school are good**

The headteacher, fully supported by other senior leaders and governors, has ensured that the school has made substantial progress since the previous inspection in developing the Christian ethos so that it has greater meaning to members of the school community. She clearly

articulates a vision strongly based on a Christian perspective of the core values and understands how they impact on the lives of children. The development of the effectiveness of the ethos committee over the last two years is a very good example of how school leaders have ensured that there is greater rigour to monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school. There is greater clarity to the role of the committee and a more strategic approach to reviewing the impact of the Christian character. This has included gathering good quality feedback from children and staff about collective worship which contributes to the school's accurate analysis of its effectiveness as a church school. Equally, leaders have a secure understanding of what the school needs to do to continue to improve. There is not yet a shared understanding of spirituality, and how it permeates all aspects of school life, across all members of the school community. The leadership and management have a good capacity to take the school forward. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training in the latest developments in RE and access advice from the diocese to support them in school self-evaluation. Leadership of RE is the responsibility of two members of staff supported by others. This means that issues can be discussed and shared and that together there is a good grasp of the strengths and areas to improve in the subject. Links with the local church are strong. Children and their parents regard the celebration of Christian festivals in the church as an integral part of being a church school. The vicar has been closely involved in the life of the school supporting collective worship and his role on the ethos committee. As he moves to another parish, other members of the church community are maintaining links with the church through the weekly 'Open the Book' team who lead an act of worship. Parents say that the school encourages their children to ask questions about faith openly and with confidence. They appreciate that members of staff support children to be reflective and consider the consequences of their actions. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report July 2016 Ann Edwards CE VC Primary School Cirencester GL7 5UW