



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Minchinhampton Primary School

School Road
Minchinhampton
Stroud
Gloucestershire
GL6 9BP

Diocese of Gloucester:

Gloucestershire LA

Date of inspection:	12th June 2012
Date of last inspection:	14 th March 2007
School's URN:	115747
Name of Headteacher:	Mr Nick Moss
Inspector:	Mrs Daphne Spitzer NS 37

Context

Minchinhampton Primary School is a church foundation school which serves the small town of Minchinhampton and outlying hamlets. There are 298 children on roll in ten classes. The numbers of children with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities is below the national average. The majority are from white British heritage families although the numbers from ethnic minorities are rising. A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. The buildings are modern and attractively designed and grounds spacious and very well laid out for learning and play activities.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Minchinhampton Primary School as a church school are outstanding

Minchinhampton Foundation Primary School is a community which loudly proclaims the roots of its ethos in Christian teaching and Christian values. This makes a profound difference to the life of the school and creates an environment which has a very positive impact on the academic, personal and spiritual development of the children.

Established strengths

- Inspiring leadership of the headteacher together with the strong commitment of the staff and governing body in developing the school's distinctive Christian character
- Harmonious relationships between the children based on Christian values
- Role of collective worship in promoting the school's Christian values
- Spiritual development which is integral to the school's daily life
- Strong partnership between the school, church and local community

Focus for development

- Acknowledge and include the school's Church of England foundation in its name.
- Vary the forms, styles and settings of worship to ensure it meets the needs of all children
- Involve parents in the school's church school evaluation process

The school's distinctive Christian character is outstanding in meeting the needs of all learners

Minchinhampton Primary School is a warm, happy Christian community where all feel highly valued and special. Christian values are recognised, celebrated and fully embedded in daily life. A very effective recent review of the school's Christian mission has significantly raised the profile of the core Christian values of perseverance, forgiveness and responsibility among all stakeholders. Children say that these values are important in their lives and are clearly linked to Christ's teaching such as in the parables of The lost sheep and the Good Samaritan. Exceptionally good relationships are the key to the success of the school. Children are very caring and supportive of one another. Highly effective and innovative lunchtime activities provide a very wide range of opportunities for children to develop responsibility. This is reflected in the strong focus on creative play, sports skills and the roles of older children acting as play leaders. Opportunities to develop good relationships across the key stages are well established and have been strengthened by recent events marking the Queen's diamond jubilee. Spiritual development is integral to the daily life of school and is a strength. This is reflected in the innovative use made of journals at quiet times each day stimulating reflection often on worship themes or religious education (RE). Children know that prayers or messages in the buddy box are read by the pastoral manager and her team and that she is there to help them. Children are also aware that their prayers are included in the termly church community prayer vigils. RE is recognised as important in the life of the school: it also promotes the school's Christian values very well. This was evident during a lesson observed when the current value of humility was linked to the Islamic story of the two brothers. Spiritual awareness was also developed very well from the high quality discussion promoted. In another lesson observed persona dolls were used to very good effect to stimulate feelings of empathy and sensitivity. Recent school initiatives, in particular the water garden in the central courtyard, have enhanced the spiritual environment significantly. Pebbles representing each child have been placed to form a path of stepping stones of Christian values. Its impact is evident in the comment from one child that her pebble gave her a sense of belonging to the school community. Bright, interactive displays featuring the school values and RE themes both in classrooms and the central areas loudly proclaim the school's Christian foundation. The omission of the words 'Church of England' in the school's title has been recognised by the governors as a historical oversight and is being addressed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to daily life. It starts the school day and is a time when staff and children assemble to share an act of Christian fellowship. Children actively participate in a variety of ways and also enjoy worship because they know it is relevant to them on a personal level. Collective worship is highly effective in promoting the school's Christian

values. This was evident in a child's comment on a recent theme of forgiveness when she said 'I remember the heart with plasters on it, this will happen to you if you can't forgive.' The headteacher is very effective as worship coordinator because he selects themes which reinforce and consolidate the school's agreed values. In the act of worship observed, children of all ages clearly understood the message of the value of humility because the headteacher used practical illustrations that were meaningful, such as washing the feet of two children. The important message that Jesus told us to be modest and humble because no one is more important than anyone else was very well understood. Worship is led by a variety of staff and clergy and takes a variety of forms. However, it usually takes place in the hall and as a whole school. As yet children do not have the opportunity to worship regularly as a smaller group and in a smaller setting, such as in a classroom which would provide a more intimate environment for reflection. Worship is highly effective in promoting Anglican traditions and practices. Recent developments such as regular Key Stage Two services in church led by the vicar have introduced children to forms of liturgy including sharing the peace. The close partnership between the vicar and headteacher has been key to the success of recent developments. The whole school visits church for services to celebrate major Christian festivals and for others, such as Harvest and Ascension day, the vicar leads worship in the school hall. The Baptist church is also used very well for Leavers' services. Spiritual awareness is promoted very well in collective worship; this was evident in the enthusiastic singing observed, as well as in moments of prayer and guided reflection. Service sheets are also used outside times of worship in an innovative way, as stimulus for reflection in their 'reflection' journals. The distinctive Christian focus is very evident as noted when two sisters talked about their own Christian faith. Collective worship is monitored and evaluated extremely effectively in a variety of ways. For instance, the headteacher as well as governors regularly seek children's views and act as required if issues are raised and staff also discuss ways in which the quality of worship can further be improved. Worship is further enhanced by the regular visits from the vicar, the Baptist minister and the Open the Book team.

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

The clear leadership of the headteacher, together with the governing body, in raising the school's distinctive Christian character has had a significant impact. Under their strong leadership, the Christian vision has been made explicit and shared with the whole school community. Since the last inspection, a Christian vision statement with a set of core values has been agreed with the whole school community. The leadership of the headteacher in providing direction for the school's distinctive Christian character is outstanding. The vicar and headteacher are working in a very productive partnership, which is ensuring that the school's Christian ethos is central to the life of the school and integral to the work of the governing body. This is evident in the role of the newly formed 'Values and Vision' committee. The chair of the governors is the Baptist minister who also works closely with the headteacher. He is a well known and valued member of the school community. The church school self evaluation process is thorough. This is reflected in the way in which the governors monitor and review progress and suggest areas for further development. Parents feel very involved in the life of the school. They appreciate the way they are encouraged to be part of the school's current value with activities and ideas planned by the vicar and sent home each term. They also value opportunities to raise issues with the school leadership, for example, at parent forum meetings. However surveys on parent views do not as yet include aspects of the life of the school as a church school so there is no formal structure for their evaluations to be included in school development planning. RE is led very well by an enthusiastic teacher who ensures her subject knowledge and training are up to date so that she is able to support staff very effectively. Links with the diocese are good and have had a positive impact on staff and governors' professional development. The school's partnership with the parish church has been strengthened since the last inspection. This is reflected in 'Experience' workshops which have been introduced over the last few years and 'Messy Church' which takes place at the school.

Links with the local community are exceptionally good and of mutual benefit. This is evident in the role of the school in the town's annual Remembrance Memorial Service and the school's link with a community in Africa which is linked to Minchinhampton ensures that children have a growing understanding of communities at home and overseas.

SIAS report, June 2012 Minchinhampton Primary School, School Road, Minchinhampton, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL6 9BP