

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

### Deerhurst and Apperley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Apperley, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL19 4DQ

**Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding**

**Current SIAMS grade: Good**

**Diocese: Gloucester**

Local authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 21 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 4 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 115619

Headteacher: Jayne Neveu

Inspector's name and number: Daphne Spitzer NS No 37

#### School context

The school serves the villages of Apperley and Deerhurst as well as surrounding areas including the city of Cheltenham. There are 81 children on roll arranged in four classes plus a 15 place pre-school unit. The vast majority of children are from white British heritage families. The numbers of children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities are above the national average. The numbers of children who are eligible to receive the pupil premium are below the national average. The headteacher was appointed in September 2015.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Deerhurst and Apperley VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian values of friendship and respect have a good impact on children's outstanding relationships, personal development and well-being
- The quality of children's spiritual awareness promoted by collective worship and the school's distinctive Christian character has a strong impact on the whole life of the school
- The visionary leadership of the headteacher, staff, vicar and governors is providing very effective strategic direction for the development of the school's distinctive Christian character

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that the school's core Christian values are rooted in biblical teaching in order to increase their impact on children's learning as well as their personal and spiritual development
- Embed opportunities for children to plan and lead worship on a regular basis

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

Deerhurst and Apperley Church of England school creates a warm, welcoming and inclusive Christian community in which all children are cherished and nurtured as unique individuals in line with the core Christian belief that each is made in the image of God. A set of core Christian values have recently been introduced and are having a good impact particularly on children's personal development and well-being. However, children do not readily associate Christian teaching with values linked to learning, with the result that Christian values are not yet fully embedded. Although children's previous learning and attainment has been variable effective steps are now being taken to address this issue. Current initiatives to promote spiritual development are based on staff's shared understanding of spirituality and are having a profound impact on the life of the school. For instance this is evident in the visit of a local paralympian, as well as a Prayer Space day recently led by the new headteacher. Children say that they understand different ways to pray and feel thankful that 'God is definitely there for you'. Opportunities to promote spiritual awareness are embedded within the curriculum; as are opportunities to use the new spiritual garden within the curriculum and by children at playtime who say they recognise it as a 'peaceful' place. Relationships at all levels and particularly amongst children are rooted in Christian values in action and are outstanding. This is reflected in the way the youngest children play happily with other older children. Children of all ages say they enjoy taking on the responsible role of playground buddies 'helping others, even teachers!' This is a good example of the way that children demonstrate the values of friendship and respect. It is also apparent in their respect for people of diverse communities and other faiths and in their desire to understand the lives of others so that they can show friendship towards them. This is the result of very effective teaching in religious education (RE) evident in the highly interactive and motivating way that children are able to understand their own family lives in relation to the Jewish families' ceremony of Shabbat. Children show open and respectful attitudes to others due to the way the school promotes special days featuring other faiths and cultures. Religious education promotes Christian values very well. For example, reflected in the good links made between the school's values of forgiveness and thankfulness and the Easter story.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship is explicitly Christian and a time of central importance at Deerhurst and Apperley. This is demonstrated by the way that members of staff attend worship, ensuring that the message permeates all aspects of the school day. Worship promotes distinctively Christian values very effectively. For instance, worship led by the headteacher and a group of children promoted the value of thankfulness very well because it highlighted the beauty and wonder of God's created world at a personal level. As a result children identified with others' comments such as the beauty of the 'sun and stars' and 'family and friends'. Children are developing a good understanding of Anglican practice and the Trinity, noted by the use of a three-wick candle to represent the Trinity with liturgical responses as well as learning within the curriculum. The regular presence of the vicar and local parish Open the Book team as well as frequent visits to both local churches strongly promotes Anglican tradition and a sense of belonging to a church community. Times of reflection and prayer are integral to worship as well as to daily life at school. Guided reflection in worship has a good impact because children confidently volunteer their thoughts which are then shared and affirmed by all present. This is an example of the very effective way that worship promotes spiritual development. Class reflective journals and areas and the central reflective area are very well used because they are interactive and relevant to children's interests. The leadership of worship is outstanding. Planning is thorough and involves the vicar as well as headteacher, staff and children. A variety of leaders, including children, along with a range of styles and settings ensure that worship is very effective in meeting the needs of all children. A recent initiative has provided opportunities for all children to plan and lead worship, often with the support of teachers,

such as the recent Lent worship led by the Reception class. Older children now plan and lead worship themselves and in this way develop a strong personal awareness of the impact of worship on the school community. Evaluations of worship by staff and governors have led to increased opportunities for drama and confirm children's high levels of satisfaction.

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

The newly appointed headteacher has made an excellent start in providing direction for the school's distinctive Christian character. She has worked extensively with parents, as well as governors, staff and children, in order to introduce a core set of values; thereby building on the school's existing strong Christian vision. Under her inspirational leadership, the profile of collective worship and RE has been raised. The drive to improve the quality of spiritual awareness has had a good impact. The commitment of the staff team to the promotion of the school's distinctive Christian character lies at the heart of the school's success and ongoing improvement as a church school. Governors understand the impact the school's Christian foundation very well. Their strategies for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance as a church school are good. For instance, noted in the committed work of the long established ethos committee, the weekly visits of governors as part of the Open the Book team and the vicar's role within the life of the school. Areas for development have been accurately identified. Children's views are sought on a regular basis and highly valued. Parents are very supportive of the school's new Christian values and feel very welcome and involved in the life of the school. They can identify and appreciate how the school's values and opportunities for spiritual development impact on their children's behaviour and attitudes. The school's links with the diocese are good. Training attended has been well chosen and has had an impact on the school's Christian distinctiveness as well as on the curriculum. Religious education is well led; for instance, the curriculum has been redeveloped in line with national expectations, marking reflects children's next steps in learning and working walls have been introduced to promote questioning and reflection. The partnership between the church and school is strong. For instance, the Parochial Church Council recently contributed towards the cost of the visit of 'I Sing Pop' which had a good impact on worship. The school is successful in its aim to serve its parish and local community; this is reflected in the exciting joint plans for the forthcoming fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the school's foundation.

SIAMS report March 2016, Deerhurst and Apperley VC, Apperley, Gloucester, GL19 4DQ