



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Chagford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Lower Street
Chagford
Newton Abbot
Devon
TQ13 8BZ

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon
Dates of inspection: 25 February 2016
Date of last inspection: 7 March 2011
School's unique reference number: 113408
Headteacher: Liz Wiseman
Inspector's name and number: Patricia Morris 626

School context

Chagford is a smaller than average primary school with 151 children on roll and 17 children in the Foundation Unit. It serves the local community and buses bring children from surrounding villages. The majority of children are of white British heritage. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of children supported by pupil premium is also below average. The headteacher has been in post just under one year after a year as acting headteacher. The school is part of the Dartmoor Cooperative Learning Trust. A new school is due to be built within the coming year.

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

- Strong relationships based on Christian values ensure that each child is nurtured and valued as an individual in a Christian environment.
- Christian values are clearly expressed and contribute to the children's behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- A shared vision between all members of the school community ensures the school is making very good progress and moving forward rapidly as a church school.

Areas to improve

- Develop a more rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship to include high quality evidence to identify priorities to move worship forward.
- Develop an understanding of what spirituality means to children so that more clearly defined opportunities to engage in spiritual experiences can be identified.
- Provide greater opportunities for children to discuss the Trinity to develop their awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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

The Christian character of the school is good because Christian values are clearly expressed and impact on the lives of children. This is seen in the way older children look after younger ones and are seen as peacemakers. The Christian ethos begins from the moment each child starts at Chagford school. A tree, to which every child has contributed a leaf of their own design, shows that 'we are growing together in God's love in a place that we feel safe'. It is also apparent in the very good behaviour and respect shown towards each other. Values were chosen by the whole community. They spell out the name 'Chagford' which enables children to recall them confidently and remind them 'to make the right decisions'. They are displayed in every classroom. Numerous banners illustrate verses from the Bible and a mosaic cross, which children describe as 'very special because it shows that God can make something beautiful from brokenness', reflects the high profile of the school as a church school. The ethos committee involves children and makes a positive contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school by giving children opportunities to raise questions and suggest ideas. For example, they worked with the school council to rephrase the behaviour policy to link more closely with school values which gave them a sense of ownership and greater responsibility. The Christian character and values of the school successfully contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. Although there isn't a common understanding of spirituality, spiritual experiences are highly valued and celebrated across the curriculum but the potential for them to be clearly identified has not been fully explored. Religious education (RE) promotes children's awareness of Christianity as a world faith raising awareness of similarities and differences between other faiths. Children respond well in lessons and show the ability to express their thoughts clearly and with confidence. There is a strong sense of partnership between school, church and the local community that is carefully nurtured through good opportunities for mutual support such as the annual 'making a difference in the community' day. Children's fund raising through World Wild Life and buying a cow to support a village, which they talk about enthusiastically, reflects their global awareness. The school's Christian ethos contributes positively to attendance which has improved considerably over the past year with the majority of children being enthusiastic to come to school. Parents praise the family atmosphere of the school and feel that the 'Thrive' scheme is a testament to the school's investment in the emotional support of their children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is important in the life of the school and plays a central role in promoting Christian values and the ethos of the school. Children are actively engaged in worship and regularly plan and lead whole school worship. There is strong evidence of the impact of collective worship on all aspects of school life including attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Children say 'it is a good way to start each day together, to be peaceful and talk to God'. Worship is thoroughly planned with opportunities for reflection and prayer. Bible stories are closely linked to values and opportunities for children to show their relevance in life today is clearly shown through drama and other interactive ways. Parents have an open invitation to attend daily worship and this contributes to the sense of family promoted by the school. A recent questionnaire confirms that the majority of parents feel their children are taught to be reflective, open minded and respectful. There is a good understanding of the church calendar and Christian festivals. Special celebrations are held in church. Children plan these with enthusiasm with care taken so everyone feels included and contributes. The partnership with the local church is very strong. Many opportunities are promoted to support RE lessons with children regularly visiting the church as part of their work. Prayer is an important and natural part of the school day. Children have opportunities to write and share their own prayers. They have a good understanding of the purpose of prayer and show a maturity of thought. For example, when older children were asked to write prayers about injustice, every child thought of global issues rather than personal situations. There is a simple understanding of the Trinity

and the development of this has not been fully explored. Children speak positively about the value of the 'Thrive' tree in the main entrance because it gives them the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings. Informal monitoring of worship takes place through evaluation sheets and child conferencing but there are few formal opportunities to use evaluation of the effectiveness of worship to identify future improvement. Leaders recognise that a more rigorous monitoring system needs to be in place.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are exceptionally good and is a strength of the school. The headteacher knows children and families extremely well and is highly committed to meeting their needs within a Christian environment. This is apparent in the clear understanding of Christian values and the child centred approach that informs all decisions. The headteacher, supported by other senior leaders and governors, has an accurate grasp of how to continue to develop the school as a church school. Governor's skills have been carefully considered and are well matched to the needs of the school. Each governor is linked to a class and stay with the same children throughout their time in school resulting in governors having a very good knowledge and understanding of how the school works and the children it cares for. The introduction of a governor portfolio group to raise the profile of the school as a church school is closely linked to values and self-evaluation. This is very effective and enables governors to monitor thoroughly and to ask challenging questions. Minutes from regular meetings, as well as a variety of other sources such as learning walks, provide secure evidence of the impact of the Christian ethos. Therefore governors have a good understanding of how the Christian ethos makes a difference to the lives of children. Leaders are instrumental in moving the school forward. This is reflected in the way they have secured the future of the school in an imminent new building and heightened its visibility by joining the Dartmoor Cooperative Learning Trust. Links with the Diocese are strong and the continual professional development of staff positively supports future leadership skills. The co-ordinator ensures that RE is based on the school's distinctive Christian values and children's work shows that attainment is in line with other core subjects. Strong links with the local church leads to successful opportunities to work with the community. For example, a lay reader visits weekly to read Bible stories to the younger classes and the appointment of a licensed youth and schools worker has enabled valuable links between the school and the community. One effective initiative is a half termly 'messy church' group which is held at the school and is very well attended. Parents appreciate the 'open door' policy and feel the school and the community are in a real partnership. They value the church school status and believe it enables their children to have space to be themselves, to grow and to make their own choices in future life.

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