



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Appleton Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Church Road

Appleton

Abingdon

OX13 5JL

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Date of inspection: 26 March 2014

Date of last inspection: September 2008

School's unique reference number: 123219

Headteacher: Annabel Brown

Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby NSIN 137

School context

Appleton CE Primary is a popular school serving the village of Appleton and other surrounding villages. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. Recent increases in pupil numbers have resulted in the building of a foundation stage and Year five classrooms. A further result of increased numbers has been the establishment of single age classes.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Appleton as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The well communicated Christian ethos that permeates the policy and practice of the school, creating a powerful sense of love, respect and support between all members of the school
- The commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to the continual development of the successful learning opportunities for all within a rich Christian environment.
- The excellent links with the church and clergy that reinforce the Christian values, worship and sense of extended community

Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for more pupil involvement in the planning and delivery of worship, with separate key stages, to enable age appropriate exploration and challenge of themes
- Access further training and support to enable all teaching in RE to be consistently outstanding and further raise standards of attainment

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

The very strong ethos, based on a range of Christian values, promotes a climate of love and respect that is obvious as one enters the school. Children understand the foundation of their school, being involved along with governors, in prioritising a number of 'values for school and home' displayed in the hall along with their Biblical references. The impact of Christian values is totally reflected in the comment of a child 'here there is a strong bond between each pupil, teachers and pupils and between all of the adults in school.' Children also acknowledge how each of them is treated as an individual and given the best possible education. High expectations of teachers, on-going assessment and evaluation result in lesson modification and challenge for pupils. This results in a stimulating learning environment with the provision of highly personalised learning. Lessons are judged as consistently good and often outstanding. Data indicates that attainment continues to be significantly above national expectations at both key stages. The school's focus on Christian love demonstrated through high expectations of all aspects of pupils' development ensures they are articulate, well-behaved and develop mature attitudes and higher order thinking skills. The profile of Christian values informs their decision-making. They make effective use of reflection areas, with liturgical colours, in classes to consider their actions, attitudes and reflect on issues in religious education (RE) and values in worship. Even the youngest children understand the value of reflection, with a child in the foundation class commenting 'I can lie up here and think about Jesus'. RE has a high profile in the life of the school and provides pupils with the knowledge and beliefs to compare other faiths with Christianity and develop respect and tolerance of other faiths. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent because of the rich curriculum and range of out of school activities. The Christian character is enhanced by displays throughout the school, the memorial and friendship bench in the school grounds. Pupils have a good understanding of others less fortunate and support them through fundraising.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is central to the development of the spiritual life of the school, impacting on those with a faith and none. Joint planning by the headteacher, RE subject leader and the vicar follows the liturgical year and school values to relate Bible teaching to everyday life. There is a clear sense of reverence and anticipation as children enter the hall. The atmosphere is heightened by a visual image and piano music played by a child. The lighting and blowing out of a candle marks worship time. Children explain its significance as well as commenting about the liturgical colours in the flame. They are engaged by the effective use of voice by the leader and respond to a previous episode in a story with quiet chanting to a drumbeat. Children understand the relevance of stories because they are related to the Bible and life of Jesus as well as their own experiences. The expressive singing and reciting the 'Lords Prayer' indicate the involvement of the whole gathered community. Prayer has an important role in the worshipping life of the school as a time 'to just talk to God.' Pupils regularly write and share prayers in worship and acknowledge the importance of silence and reflection for all faiths and none. They understand the Trinity as 'like God in different ways; God the father created the world, God the son was Jesus on the earth and the Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost.' The school has close ties with the nearby church. The vicar leads a weekly act of worship and supports the teaching of RE. These enable children to respond to questions such as 'What does the cross mean to me?' and make comments such as 'so Jesus is a bridge between us and God.' The church is used for festival services. The secure links between school and church are illustrated in the displays of children's work and their involvement in decorating the church for Mothering Sunday and Holy week. This ensures that children are familiar and comfortable in church. The links are furthered by members of church listening to readers, extending the sense of community between school and church. Year six pupils are involved in the planning and delivery of worship each week, developing their confidence and understanding of Christian values. However, evaluation from pupils indicates the desire for the involvement of all year groups in leading worship. Children have also recognised that separate key stage worship would give greater opportunities for more age appropriate exploration of values and beliefs.

The effectiveness of religious education is outstanding

Religious education is a high profile subject that is successfully promoted by an experienced subject leader. All staff benefit from her knowledge and support. The well-written policy identifies links to all areas of the curriculum, recognising its importance and contribution to the distinctive character of the school. The knowledge and confidence of less experienced staff are particularly supported through planning, lesson observations, model lessons and work scrutiny. This ensures that high expectations and attainment are maintained. This is furthered through the use of a commercially produced RE resource (Discovery RE) that is used alongside the Oxfordshire syllabus to ensure that children successfully learn from religion. All children enjoy the high expectation and opportunities to develop their thinking skills, with support as necessary. For example, older children can discuss 'are there things that God cannot forgive?' Assessment that includes 'I can statements', post it notes from teaching assistants and on-going teacher assessment, indicates that pupil achievement is high, with many achieving better levels than in literacy. Teaching is at least good and often outstanding because of creative and imaginative ways of engaging and challenging children's thinking. This also develops the religious vocabulary of children. For example, a key stage one child commented 'the Good Samaritan acted with compassion.' Other vocabulary understood by children includes *incarnation* and *sacrifice*. Religious art and children recording through art are effectively used to extend children's responses, such as their ideas of creation. Children develop their understanding of Christianity through exploring and retelling stories from different perspectives. A Year six class was encouraged to reflect and discuss the powerful imagery in a series of challenging poems about the crucifixion. They identified a range of Christian concepts and made links between these and phrases in the poems, before identifying the most appropriate for given situations. Their discussion showed a secure understanding of the Easter story, for example the final words of Jesus 'it is finished.' A year two class shared a number of DVD clips of special people and celebrations, linked to the values of hope and humility, before imagining the feelings of the crowd and Jesus at the entry to Jerusalem. In discussion children show a good understanding of the main features of other major faiths.

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

The headteacher has clear vision for children to understand and experience Christian values and their impact on living their future lives with determination and responsibility. Governors have a secure understanding of the distinctive Christian character of the school, the impact of Christian values on the curriculum and development of the whole child. They ensure that Christian values inform all policies, behaviour and attitudes of everyone in school. They understand the central role of worship and RE in the life of the school and through regular visits and observations ensure the impact of these on academic and person achievements is maintained. Foundation governors have a good understanding of the breadth of their role in school in maintaining the ethos, spiritual development and links with the church. They are involved in on-going discussion and evaluation of Christian values as part of the curriculum committee that feeds back to the whole governing body. Diocesan training and input provide up to date knowledge of church school evaluation that forms the basis of school discussion and questionnaires that inform future strategic planning, including in RE and worship. Involvement in the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and partnerships with aspiring schools provide opportunities for leadership experience and succession planning. The impact of Christian values in the whole community is reflected in the high quality pastoral support for all. This is especially so during times of difficulty when life affirming love results in hope and celebration. Parents also acknowledge the 'amazing level of pastoral care where loving is strong, like belonging to one big family.' They are proud of the school and its impact on their children commenting 'Our children bring the school values home. They are confident and enjoy school.' Members of other faiths comment on the strength of the shared values of the school. The school enjoys beneficial links with the local village and church communities, some of whom regularly listen to readers in school.



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SIAMS Judgement Recording Form (JRF)

This form is to be attached to the main SIAMS report and returned to the diocese in which the school is situated and to the National Society.

School Name	Appleton Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School
School Address	Church Road Appleton Abingdon OX13 5JL
School URN	123183
Date of Inspection	26 March 2014
NS Inspector's Number	137
Type of Church School	Voluntary Aided
Number of Pupils	177
Phase of Education	Primary
Name of Critical Reader	Jo Fageant
Has Diocesan Quality Assurance been obtained for this Report? Yes	

	Rating 1-4
How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church School?	1
How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?	1
What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	1
How effective is the religious education?	1
How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	1
The school meets the statutory requirements for collective acts of worship	Yes
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education	Yes