



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Uley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Uley, Dursley, Gloucestershire GL11 5SW

Diocese of Gloucester

Local Authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 25th September 2012

Date of last inspection: 25th March 2009

School's URN: 115657

Name of Acting Headteacher: David Warren

SIAS Inspector NS268: Muriel Griffiths

Context

Uley School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school of 96 pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs are below average. A very large majority of the pupils are of white British heritage, and none speak English as an additional language. The school has been led since the beginning of the current term by an acting headteacher as the headteacher is on secondment for one term.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Uley School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Uley is an outstanding Church of England school. The strong Christian ethos provides a distinctive and effective learning environment for pupils' spiritual and moral growth. The quality of relationships and the emphasis on Christian values characterise the outstanding ethos of this Church of England school. The school and its church enjoy a very special partnership as a joint focal point in the village and this adds considerably to the distinctive character of the school.

Established strengths

- The strong commitment of the headteacher, governors and staff to the development of the school's Christian character.
- Outstanding interwoven links between the school, parents, church and village community.
- The school's outstanding Christian ethos, reflected in the excellent relationships and level of care throughout the school.

Focus for development

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to be involved in planning, leading and evaluating acts of worship.
- Develop the school's own set of Christian values providing ownership of them by involving the whole school community.

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

Uley Church school is a warm and caring Christian community. The inclusive and friendly ethos ensures that all children make good progress academically, socially and in their personal development. Parents recognise and value the school's Christian status and pupils take pride in their school demonstrating clear understanding of its Anglican tradition. Pupils and parents see the parish church of St Giles as an extension of the school and the frequent and regular use of its facilities has engendered positive attitudes. The strong Christian ethos emphasises important values and attitudes and this is reflected in the way which members of the school community respect and care for each other. Christian values, from the collective worship resource, 'Values for Life' are central to the life of the school and motivate the school community in their actions and decision making. The current values, respect and reverence, were introduced by the vicar, when leading collective worship at the beginning of term. She helped pupils to understand their meaning by reference to the reverence and respect shown to items such as the chalice, used in church for Holy Communion. Pupils have opportunities in class to discuss the current value and cite their own written examples about its meaning such as 'I show that I respect someone by making eye contact with them when they are talking to me'. Children have an excellent understanding of the importance of the Christian values and apply them to their everyday lives. For example, they explain that 'forgiveness is what you show to someone who says they are sorry and really means it'. The emphasis placed by the school on its Christian values means that pupils grow and flourish into mature and responsible members of the school community. Many opportunities are taken throughout the curriculum to help children to have a better understanding of the values. Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) provides many openings for pupils to discuss the meaning of the school's values. There are also frequent opportunities for children to work across key stages so that they are able to build friendships with children of all ages. During the Science and Engineering Week, older pupils supported younger children in making moving models. This strong sense of responsibility is also reflected in the way they raise funds for others beyond the school community such as the local hospice or 'Seeds for Africa'. Pupils have high levels of self-esteem and demonstrate independence and maturity. Very good behaviour results from the clear expectations of staff as they provide excellent role models of Christian values and principles. This ethos, collective worship and religious education (RE) lessons are effective in supporting the spiritual and moral development of all children. Quiet times for reflection are built into the school day as well as times for prayer and saying grace before lunch. The prominence of displays symbolising the Christian foundation of the school and its values has a significant impact on pupils. Children talk knowledgeably about the reflective area, where there is a statement about the term's Christian value, a Bible and a display about special days in the church calendar. Pupils know that they are part of the celebration of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Since the previous inspection, an outdoor reflective area, the Spiritual Peace Garden, has been developed and children explain that it is used as somewhere to 'pray or just be quiet'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship occupies a place of central importance in the daily life of the school. It actively supports and strongly promotes the school's Christian ethos. This is evident in the way that the children talk about this special time when the school comes together 'to pray and learn to respect God'. Pupils learn about Christian values, Bible stories, religious traditions and special days in the Christian calendar through a carefully planned programme. The use of the 'Values for Life' materials provides an excellent framework for the Christian values that are at the heart of the school. Older pupils show their understanding of caring when they talk about ensuring that they look out for children who are sitting on the Buddy Bench at playtime. Pupils' views have been sought about the impact of the daily act of worship and their responses were positive and say that they would like more opportunities to be actively involved. Pupils, particularly the older ones, enjoy being able to participate in worship in many ways such as singing, reading, acting out stories and sharing their own prayers. They have opportunities to lead and plan worship in the termly church services, which they especially appreciate and would like to do more regularly as part of daily worship. Children begin the daily act of worship with a time to light the candle and reflect saying 'Jesus is the Light of the World'. Children's understanding of Anglican faith and practice is enhanced by the particularly strong and effective links that exist between the school and the local church. Pupils look forward to weekly visits of the 'Open the Book' team. They like having opportunities to help to act out the Bible stories that are presented and speak enthusiastically about what they have learned on these occasions. The regular visits by the vicar and the Open the Book team provide excellent opportunities for pupils to get to know local Christians. Prayer is an important part of life at Uley and children are learning the recently introduced format for prayer, using actions, which helps them to understand that it is 'giving thanks, a sorry and a please'. In a lesson observed during the inspection, pupils were writing their own prayers for the Harvest Thanksgiving Service, which provided excellent opportunities for pupils to apply their recent learning in collective worship about prayer. A termly service held in the parish church helps pupils to increase their knowledge and understanding of the church calendar. These services also help children to understand the importance of worship and celebration to Christians. Year 6 children attend the annual leavers' services in Gloucester Cathedral. These occasions provide valuable opportunities for pupils to increase their experience of the wider Christian church, as did the visit by the Bishop of Gloucester to the school's Harvest Thanksgiving last year. Children talk perceptively about special worship services in which they participate, such as the re-dedication of the Spiritual Peace Garden by the vicar. Another such example is the Ash Wednesday service which helps pupils to understand the tradition of saying sorry at the beginning of Lent.

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

The impressive quality of the leadership and management at Uley comes from a clear understanding of the difference that a church school can make to the lives of children. The school's distinctive Christian vision is at the very heart of the school and it is clearly communicated to the whole school community. It is promoted exceptionally well in every part of the school's life. The school's vision is 'to achieve

a high quality education within a caring Christian centred community, where every child is valued and encouraged to realise their full potential'. The commitment to live according to the school's Christian values strongly underpins the school ethos. As a parent commented, 'the church provides a foundation, which puts the values in a Christian context'. Development planning is in place to move the school forward in its Christian distinctiveness. For example, the school is considering the introduction of a School Eucharist. The proactive role of the vicar and the foundation governor is a key feature of its success as a church school. Governors know their school well and have an important role in monitoring and evaluating collective worship, RE and church school distinctiveness. They visit regularly and speak of the welcome that they receive. Their monitoring and evaluation provide information for the governor's Ethos Committee and the promotion of the school's Christian distinctiveness. The vicar, who is also a governor, is a regular visitor to the school both to lead worship and more informally. She provides much valued pastoral support for all members of the school community and has an excellent understanding of the importance of the school's mission in partnership with the church, to the children and their families. Due to the commitment of the foundation governor and the members of the local church community, links with the parish church are excellent. Parents have been consulted about the school as one with a church of England foundation and also, about its Christian values. The school would benefit from developing its own set of core values in order to provide a feeling of ownership by all stakeholders. Parents like the fact that the school has a church foundation and many attend the school services in church to celebrate Christian festivals. They enjoy opportunities to join their children for worship. The school lives out the message in its Mission Statement that 'Christian values drive all aspects of school life, curriculum and ethos'.

SIAS report September 2012 Uley CEVC Primary School Uley, Dursley GL11 5SW