



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Speen Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School

Flowers Bottom Lane
Speen
Princes Risborough
Buckinghamshire
HP27 0SX

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Buckinghamshire

Date of inspection: 9 December 2014

Date of last inspection: October 2009

School's unique reference number: 110468

Headteacher: Denise Nayna

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Speen Infant School is a small, rural school serving the village of Speen and surrounding villages. Currently, there are 41 pupils on roll who are almost all from a White British background. There are 6 children from families serving with HM Armed Forces in school this term. The school is linked to St John's Church in nearby Lacey Green and there is a Baptist chapel in the village of Speen.

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

- The strong sense of a nurturing family Christian community, underpinned by core Christian values.
- The focus on each child as an individual in this welcoming and worshipping Christian community which develops positive attitudes amongst its young pupils, who become confident, independent learners and achieve well.
- The importance of prayer in the life of this church school which nurtures pupils' spiritual development.
- Flourishing partnerships between church, school and village communities, which are valued by everyone, whether or not they belong to the local Christian community.

Areas to improve

- Enhance pupil evaluation and opportunities for these young children to plan and lead collective worship in order to increase pupil engagement with worship and ensure best quality worship in this church school at all times.
- Embed the monitoring and assessment of religious education [RE] to inform planning, raise standards and enable all learners to achieve highly.
- Establish a forum for pupils and adults to discuss together key Christian concepts and beliefs about the saints and lesser known Christian festivals in order to deepen their learning and nurture their spiritual development.

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

Speen Infants sustains a positive learning environment for its young pupils, who are proud to belong, feel valued and achieve highly. This is because the school is an inclusive, happy and family community, rooted in the Christian faith. There is also a strong desire to live out the school's chosen Christian values and to 'Seek, Believe and Achieve'. Such values as respect and responsibility within this small community are integral to what the school teaches. Attendance is very good. This is because as a church school, there is great encouragement for children to have a commitment to school. Consequently, they are missed in this small school if they are absent. There have been no exclusions. This is because the school works hard with individual pupils and their families, with the support of staff committed to ensuring that pupils' needs are met with tailored and personalised learning. A good example is the support which is given for speech and language by specialist teachers. Achievement is good, with the focus on each unique child reaching their potential. The school's values are built into every lesson, and these young children thrive on the culture and ethos which Speen creates. This is because pupils are encouraged to show honesty and courage and achieve their best. Christian values make them secure in their learning in an environment where the staff are exemplary role models for these young pupils. All achievement is celebrated and linked to the school's values. Pupils feel able to make a positive contribution to school life and experience the Christian values of service and generosity through their fundraising. Such values enhance their understanding of their place in the world and their responsibility to others. Pupils show respect for the diverse community they belong to, enriched by visits to other places of worship. Learning is aspirational, not just academic, with a wide range of achievement valued, including music which is strength of the school. Thus, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The attitude of pupils to collective worship is good because the quality of worship offered to them is making a real difference in their lives, contributing greatly to their spiritual development. All staff attend worship, which is recognised as an important part of the day as it helps to build community. Consequently, pupils and parents speak highly of worship, and are able to make links between Jesus' teaching in the Bible and everyday situations. These young children say they find singing, praying and hearing Bible stories in worship helps them live their lives. Worship helps them to make the right choices in life and they are encouraged to be helpful and considerate to others. They 'like to worship in peace and quiet in church'. They go on to say they 'learn more about Jesus in church and read some of The Bible there'. The vicar is new in post but welcomes establishing strong links with the school and supporting its worshipping life. Prayer groups run by parents flourish, meeting termly to pray for families. Worship involves, engages and challenges pupils, with prayer an important part of school and home life. As a result, they express The Holy Trinity as 'God the Father who made the world, God the Son who is everywhere and God the Holy Spirit who is the God in heaven'. The well-used purpose built prayer and reflection area supports pupils' spiritual development. Currently, pupil evaluation on worship is gathered through talking to the children. However, foundation governors and pupils recognise the importance of sharing their viewpoints more formally as well as extending pupil opportunities to lead worship, even for the very youngest children, so that its integrity and quality continually enhances pupils' spiritual development.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

Pupils clearly enjoy their religious education [RE] lessons in this school where RE is important and teaching and learning is consistently of a high standard. All RE lessons are taught by the headteacher as separate lessons. The progress of these young pupils is good in relation to age related expectations. They are aware of their targets and know how to improve in their work. RE is well led and managed by the headteacher with termly tracking and assessment of pupils' progress in place. However, the school has rightly identified the need to embed the

assessment of RE in order to inform planning and consequently raise standards. Children talk confidently and knowledgably of the Christian narrative as well as showing respect for, and knowledge of, Hinduism and Islam. Even the very youngest children know Advent means 'coming', making the link to their school Advent wreath, and know that Jesus is 'the King of Kings'. Older pupils are able to focus on the concept of belonging and are able to reflect on what matters to them, such as belonging to a church or mosque. However, the school acknowledges the need to deepen pupils' learning by establishing times in the school day for small groups of children to discuss key Christian concepts, such as incarnation, salvation and trinity in an age-appropriate way. They plan to devote time for pupils to explore challenging questions of faith and life with adults, including their new vicar, as well as explore the life of St John and Ascension and Pentecost.

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

This school's Christian foundation is effectively promoted by the headteacher's own strong Christian commitment and vision which is instrumental in driving the school. This is well supported by the staff and governors, and includes the link governor for worship and RE. There is a renewed impetus from the governors to sustain the links between St John's Church and the school. Currently, St John's Church is used to celebrate key festivals, such as Christmas. This is welcomed by the House for Duty priest who has recently been appointed. The school's Christian heritage is also valued by pupils and parents so that the Anglican foundation is celebrated and secure. Parents speak highly of how their children's needs and abilities are well met and how the wellbeing of pupils is given the highest priority. Collective worship and RE have an equally high status as the headteacher holds these important portfolios. Parents speak highly of this close knit community, saying all the children and staff know each other very well. They appreciate the level of care for their young children, valuing this sense of security and say they too feel welcome. The children have a voice through the school council, making suggestions for charity fundraising. Areas from the last inspection have been addressed, showing how the school has moved on, with clear priorities for future action. The school's distinctive Christian character is discussed at every governing body meeting and is kept high on its agenda, demonstrating its importance for new and experienced governors alike. All governors are committed to monitoring the performance of the school and to embed this monitoring with the school's values. As a result, governors ensure that the school's Christian values are at the core of the way learning is delivered and received by the children. Consequently, everyone recognises that respect and understanding have to be worked at within an environment where children are valued. Staff in this rural infant school take on many roles and responsibilities and appreciate the training and support offered to them by the diocese. Community links are strong with the local pre-school, and the Baptist church. In addition, some retired ladies from the village hear children read. The school has been used to host a national theatre production for the local community. This raises the profile of the school and shows how the school works hard to reflect its Christian foundation through its commitment to serving the children of Speen Infants and their families.

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