



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Kempsford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kempsford
Fairford
Gloucestershire
GL7 4EY

Diocese: Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 14 November 2014

Date of last inspection: 19 November 2009

School's unique reference number: 115629

Headteacher: Richard Mendum

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Kempsford is smaller than the average primary school with 88 children on roll who are arranged into four class groups. They come from varied socio-economic backgrounds in a rural setting. The majority of children are from a white British heritage. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average overall as is the number receiving pupil premium support. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2014. There is a new senior leadership team and some newly appointed governors.

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

- Christian values are increasingly making a difference to the children's learning as well as to their personal development.
- Strong relationships between school and church help to place both communities at the heart of the life of the village.
- An effective ethos committee ensures that the profile of the school as a church school, and its ongoing development, has a high priority among the school's leaders and managers.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that, as the new **core values are embedded in the children's learning** and wellbeing, **children acquire a language that enables them to express a deeper understanding of what these values mean to them personally.**
- Develop more rigour to the planning of collective worship so that **greater cohesion of worship across the school places worship messages and the core values more centrally at the heart of all aspects of school life** and identify **greater opportunities for children's leadership of worship.**
- **Enhance the role of the ethos committee** by the acquisition of new skills to enable them to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of recent initiatives.

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

Explicit Christian values are an established part of school life and clearly evident to children and adults in school. They talk about how values such as trust and thankfulness make a positive difference to relationships throughout the school. Children say that learning about values helps them to respond with confidence when relationships are hard. **The new headteacher has begun to raise the profile of Christian values by linking them more closely to children's learning.** In this way the language of values is more evident in the classroom because they are used to encourage children to engage more actively in their learning: for example through the 'trust' needed to engage in effective collaborative work. Christian values are therefore having an increasing impact on children's academic standards which data indicates is variable. **The school is currently in the process of further strengthening its values by identifying a core set and plans to use these to drive teaching and learning. This is at an early stage and the school has yet to equip children with the language to enable them to explore the relationship of these values with learning and wellbeing at a deeper level.** Reflection areas in classrooms and interactive displays enable children to express their thoughts and opinions, to write prayers and develop a personal spirituality based on their own beliefs. They are comfortable to share their views on matters of faith and belief and do so with respect for the views of others. They are sometimes a little hesitant with their responses. Religious education (RE) is making a good contribution to the promotion of Christian values through opportunities for children to ask questions and enquire as part of their learning. **Children are becoming familiar with this approach to RE and are gaining greater confidence to discuss their opinions and debate with others.** The many opportunities to engage in charitable work both locally and globally, and studies in RE of a range of faiths, is helping children to have a better understanding of the diversity of religions and cultures in the world. This understanding, together with the impact of Christian values, means that the good opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural development enable children to link this aspect of their education to the Christian ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Collective worship is an important part of the school day at Kempsford and promotes explicit Christian values. Members of the school community appreciate the place that worship has in the life of the school. For example, children regard worship as a key expression of the school's Christian character and parents speak of the value they place on children learning about stories from the Bible. **The school has used the 'Values for Life' material as the basis for collective worship** planning for a number of years and children are very familiar with these values. However, **overall planning lacks detail and rigour particularly regarding the level of cohesion between what is being delivered between whole school worship and Key Stage worship. The impact of worship messages is therefore not being fully realised.** A key strength of school leadership is their awareness of this need to improve planning. Acts of worship are distinct times in the school day and include elements of Bible teaching and time for reflection and prayer. Older children have a good understanding that prayers can be said to say thank you to God or to say sorry for things they have done. They explain maturely their understanding that God listens to everyone's prayers regardless of whether they have a faith or not because 'God loves everyone and makes no distinction'. Younger children have a more limited experience of different types of prayer but can explain that prayers can 'make your life better'. Acts of worship are regularly held in the local church and this gives children an understanding of the main festivals of the Christian year. For example, children are clear about the meaning of Christmas and Easter. The adequate opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the Trinity are being enhanced through displays in the school hall that give children a visual representation of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Children are regularly involved in collective worship through participation in role play and writing prayers for special celebrations. **They have more limited opportunity to plan and lead worship and to be part of its evaluation.** The ethos committee effectively monitors and evaluates the impact of worship and has good systems in place to ensure that evidence from observations is used to identify actions for further improvements.

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

Kempsford has a well-established Christian vision underpinned by explicit Christian values. School leaders and managers have ensured that this distinctive Christian character has been maintained since the previous inspection and, through the establishment of the ethos committee, has been making accelerated progress over the last 18 months to strengthen the impact of the Christian character. The appointment of a new headteacher in September 2014 has given extra impetus to this progress. In a relatively short time, the headteacher has gained a clear understanding of what needs to be done to continue to take the school forward as a church school. Working closely with the ethos committee, he has implemented a number of initiatives to develop the work already begun to place explicit Christian values at the centre of children's wellbeing as well as their learning. It is too early to fully evaluate the impact of these initiatives particularly with regard to how they make a difference to the planning and evaluation of collective worship. However, through the thorough monitoring and evaluation carried out by the ethos committee, school leaders, including governors, have a very clear grasp of the actions they will take to embed a new set of core Christian values into all aspects of school life. They also understand the need to acquire new skills to enable them to develop their monitoring and evaluation strategies in the light of new initiatives. Leaders and managers have a good capacity for continued improvement as a church school. In particular, there is a growing appreciation of the links between Christian values and children's learning. The headteacher is taking especial care to ensure that all members of the school community are involved in the process to identify core values and has already identified ways in which the professional development of school staff is a key element to ensure the successful impact of an evolving Christian ethos. An important development since the previous inspection has been the growth in relationships between the school and the local church. There is now greater interaction between the two communities with benefits to both arising from this closer cooperation. For example, the church community provide the team who lead the popular 'Open the Book' worship and the church youth team run clubs after school and in the holidays. Through such partnerships as this, the school and church are more meaningfully an important part of the local community. The vicar plays a central role in this and is an integral part of the life of the school. Statutory requirements for RE are met and the new leader has identified areas to develop the subject. The school meets statutory arrangements for delivering acts of collective worship.

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