



Ashurst CE Primary School

Diocese of Chichester

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report



Date of inspection:	7 and 14 November 2012
Name of inspector:	Connie Hughes
NS inspector's number:	765
School address:	School Lane Ashurst Steyning West Sussex BN44 3AY
Unique reference number:	126020
Status:	Voluntary Aided
Number on roll:	61
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
LA:	West Sussex
Name of chair of governors:	Alison Woods
Name of headteacher:	Janet Williams
Date of previous inspection:	March 2007

The inspection of denominational education and collective worship in the school was carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Description of the school

Ashurst is a small rural village primary school situated in the parish of Ashurst. The original school building dates from 1873 but has had structural updates from the 1990's. Currently there is a high pupil ratio of children from the village within the three classes, including fifty per cent of the Reception class. The school is popular with families from the surrounding area. There are strong links to the parish church of St. James, currently experiencing the lack of a substantive Rector but well supported by the lay preachers. Many families attend other churches within the local area. According to official school records, 86% of the school population is Christian.

Summary judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ashurst CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The school's Aided status is implicit in the daily life of the school. Parents, governors and members of the community reflect on the Christian ethos of the school as 'outstanding'. One parent expressed 'God is a member of staff because he is called on for everything'. The headteacher and staff have well established close relationships with parents who celebrate, respect and value the inclusive climate and experiences offered to all their children, past and present. Members of the parish church reflect on a solid foundation of Christian values observed through children's charitable acts and worship at school and St. James' parish church.

Grade: 1

Established strengths

- The dedicated Christian leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors underpins the outstandingly positive relationships within the community as a whole.
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) provision impacts on children's understanding, application and success as responsible citizens.
- Engagement in meaningful dedicated acts of Collective Worship deepens the spiritual growth and affirmation of the children's Christian faith.
- The consistent response to Religious Education (RE), Attainment Target 2, 'learning from religion' by the children promotes an understanding and respect for a diverse world.

Focus for development

- To make explicit self-evaluation processes in relation to their Christian foundation and values as a Church of England (CE) Aided Primary school.
- Establish areas in the school for personal peaceful reflection and prayer.
- To extend the monitoring role of the RE subject leader, utilising the planned Chichester Diocesan training.

The school meets the statutory requirement for Collective Worship	Yes
The school meets the statutory requirement for Religious Education	Yes

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

Parents identify Christian values, skilled teamwork and a thorough knowledge and understanding of each individual child's needs in this flourishing school. High quality teaching, a stimulating curriculum, safe environment and inclusive provision significantly affect academic achievement. The 'school is our family' with an 'ethos based on Christian fellowship' reported parents. SMSC experiences contribute strongly and identify the pupils as responsible, caring citizens within the locality, nationally and globally. A foundation governor, villager and member of St. James' Parochial Church Council (PCC) praised the children's willingness and want to continue to knit 'Teddies for Tragedy' for the children in war torn countries. Within this small school, all children have a voice in contributing to a democratic ethos as they 'listen to each other and work together as a whole school' explained a long standing parent and echoed by many. RE supports the emotional capacity of the children in learning from and valuing planned experiences'; for example, visiting their formal partnership town school for an insight into a more diverse culture. 'Gardening, Growing, Eating and Feeding' are the principal themes of the school's thriving learning and charitable partnership with its outreach school in Gambia and their own "Bumbles" garden located on a neighbour's land. The environment reflects its distinctive Christian character through all-encompassing nurture, religious symbols, and a creative curriculum. A stunning banner to which all children proudly contributed brings together the key geographical, historical and spiritual landmarks of the village community and global links. All children identified the school as 'A is for Ashurst and A for Attitude with kindness, kindness, kindness' as a core value.

Grade: 1

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is outstanding.

Daily Collective Worship (CW) is in the Anglican tradition, in line with the Trust Deed and the school's Aided status. The headteacher as the CW co-ordinator through themed assemblies ensures children reflect on of Christian values and develop spiritually to gain a sense of awe and wonder in their daily life. This was evident in a conversation with the Reception and Key Stage 1 children walking to St. James' church for an RE lesson on a beautiful Autumn day and God's creation visibly celebrated in the beauty of a golden tree. The nurture and promotion of children's spiritual growth is exemplified through written and spoken comments from all aspects of school life, visitors and parents. Once a month in term time some staff and children attend a Sunday Family Service and during the year the church is used to celebrate major Christian festivals. Children decorate the church entrance for Harvest Festival with their own work created especially for the occasion. When participating in the annual Remembrance Day service, the Lay Preacher expressed the children demonstrated 'real respect, expectation and insight, an open respect in the right way'. A most memorable school Remembrance Day service, led by **Year 3 and 4**, and attended by governors and members of the village, shared their knowledge of World War Two through emotive singing, poetry, prose and prayer, with a member of the village playing the 'Last Post' on his bugle. Children express positive attitudes to CW clearly explaining how it influences their own beliefs and values. They shared 'we believe in many things about God and Jesus...Jesus is the Son of God...He loves us all'. Prayer is integral to the life of the school. Their Christian heritage is inherent in whole school understanding of The Lord's Prayer, saying Grace at mealtimes from their own book of prayers and all using sign language when sharing God's blessing. **The school lacks areas for personal, peaceful reflection.**

The school is planning to provide more areas for personal, peaceful reflection. (HT discussed wording with Mrs Hughes Friday 23rd November)

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of Religious Education is outstanding.

Well-structured comprehensive schemes of work and topic cycles, incorporating a range of curriculum areas, provide a breadth of Religious Education (RE) and SMSC experiences for the children. Resources, including support for the children's understanding and knowledge of Christianity in relation to other world faiths and beliefs, promote effective and interactive learning, securing Attainment Target (AT) 1 'learning about religion and exemplifying AT2 'learning from religion'. The school community speak of valuable learning regarding 'diversity and similarity that exist among people of the world and their respective cultures' through the school charitable link with Mr Cham, headteacher of Kotukala School in Gambia. During his extended second visit to gain teaching experience at Ashurst CE school in the Spring term, 2012, the children were able to learn more about life in the Gambia and his Muslim faith. Children in the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class, as Church detectives, keenly explored the internal environment of St James's Church. Teachers planned and provided resources and open questions that stimulated and engaged their interest whilst showing understanding and a respect for the spiritual environment. One child gazing at a stained glass window stated 'it reminds us of Jesus, we celebrate His love and His father God'. Working with a regular visiting Lay Preacher, also a parent, Year 5 and 6 children enthusiastically and imaginatively participated in Biblical story telling, discussion and role-play. Drawing comparison with the relationships between the old Testament stories of Joseph and his brothers, they powerfully re-enacted of the story of David and Goliath. Together they explored the emotion of jealousy and the importance of taking your feelings to God through prayer, asking for His strength in responding to recognisable human reactions. The school's procedures for monitoring and assessment of RE identify that all children make good and often very good progress in the subject. Establishing a more formal lesson observation role for the subject leader, will secure a more comprehensive evidence of the effective skills, knowledge and experiences of the teaching team and their impact on all learners.

Grade: 1**The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding.**

The headteacher is both 'passionate about the school' and 'compassionate... nothing is too much trouble for her and her team' agree governors and parents. Governors identify the Christian ethos as intrinsic in the school culture and wider family community; a parent governor reported that their family experience of the St James' Remembrance Service was 'a talking point at home for the rest of the day'. The headteacher and the Governing Body recognise they are at a period of transition as the school awaits the arrival of a new incumbent in St. James' church, following a strong partnership with the recently retired Rector. They have identified the need to build further upon the school's Church of England Aided foundation. Through a range of diocesan professional development for staff and governors, they are preparing to self-evaluate their role in relation to the new CE school inspection framework as a standing item on Governing Body meetings. They are aware of leadership succession planning within the constraints of a small school. The school has effective communication and partnerships with all stakeholders through the engaging school website, annual school parent and children evaluation questionnaires, regular contributions to the village activities, church and parish magazine. This summer 100% of parents in the formal annual evaluation questionnaire identify with the school's distinctive Christian character and its mission statement 'is manifest in everything it does'. Parents stated there is 'a genuine sense of community with a close bond where all children play together and look after each other and it carries on at home'.

Grade: 1