

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Shenington Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Stocking Lane
Shenington
Oxfordshire
OX15 6NF

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Date of inspection: 28 April 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 123273

Headteacher: Sarah Reynolds

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

Shenington Primary School is a small village primary school which serves the villages of Shenington and Alkerton and the neighbouring area. The majority of its pupils are from a white British background and are taught in four mixed age classes. The number of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is exceedingly small in this popular and oversubscribed school. Staffing is stable. The assistant headteacher also has the responsibility for special educational needs. The religious education [RE] coordinator is new in post. Ofsted judged the school to be good in March 2016.

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

- The Christian vision and dedication of the headteacher in partnership with the staff, governors and clergy ensures the Christian character of this church school permeates daily life.
- This nurturing and inclusive environment is a welcoming and accepting Christian community which is supportive of all the children and families it serves.
- Strong leadership and good governance is rooted in the mutual and substantial links between church and school.

Areas to improve

- Enable pupils to grow in their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit to enrich their worshipping life and knowledge of worldwide Anglican tradition and practice.
- Extend the programme of visits and visitors to enable pupils to encounter people of faith more frequently to enrich their learning and support their spiritual and cultural development.

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

Shenington is a welcoming, inclusive and nurturing Christian family which successfully embodies 'excellence through endeavour'. It is a place where the wellbeing of the whole community is of utmost importance. This is

because the school's Christian values, such as love, respect, inclusion and friendship underpin all school life. The Christian ethos drives positive progress and makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, relationships between all members of the school community are very good. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school, are proud to belong, feel valued and achieve highly. Attendance is very good and there have been no exclusions. Even the very youngest children are encouraged to persevere and all children are challenged to look for Christian values in daily life. All pupils make good progress and are supported by a dedicated team of staff, who know the children incredibly well in this small, family school. They also work closely with parents on supportive strategies within a positive culture of compassion where children are valued as individuals and enabled to flourish. A range of extra-curricular activities, including music and sport, enables a greater range of achievement for many pupils and values individual talents. As a result, some pupils play their instruments in collective worship or at church services. In addition, a local charity provides financial support where appropriate to enable needy pupils to attend residential visits or access breakfast clubs. Pupils show respect for diverse cultures and beliefs through RE and worship, which make very good contributions to the school's Christian character and to pupils' personal development. However, pupils say they would like to visit more places of worship and meet visitors from different faiths in order to deepen their learning and enrich their understanding of diverse communities and cultures. Whilst there is a focus on the saints with a saints' day each month, pupils go on to say they would like to know more about Christianity as a worldwide faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship at Shenington is integral to daily life, making a very good contribution to the spiritual development of the gathered community. This is because acts of worship involve and engage everyone and are linked to Bible stories, the seasons of the church year and the school's Christian values. Worship embraces the Christian faith and reflects on values which everyone can relate to in their lives, such as friendship, forgiveness and inclusion, setting them in a Christian context. Consequently, pupils firmly believe 'everyone is equal and everyone fits in'. They are growing in their age-appropriate understanding of a Trinitarian God. They speak of The Holy Trinity as God' because he is three things which is Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. However, the school acknowledges that helping pupils to understand better God as Trinity would enrich their knowledge of Anglican worship worldwide. One of the strengths of worship at Shenington is the importance attached to key Bible passages and the context in which they are found. A good example is pupils being encouraged to locate key texts, such as where the story of the leper can be found in the four gospels. Times of prayer and reflection are important and encouraged. Pupils say they enjoy worship outdoors, reflecting on God's creation. Pupils and staff evaluate worship, informing future development. A good example is worship taking place in the morning instead of the afternoon. Moreover, more traditional hymns are also sung more frequently as a result of parental feedback. Pupils who are members of the Seedlings, a lunchtime group, actively prepare and lead worship on a regular basis in both school and church. This was introduced by the associate vicar, who is a welcome and regular visitor to school. Staff and clergy have also discussed introducing services of Holy Communion into the regular worshipping pattern at Shenington School. They are keen to take this forward. Pupils experience worship led by a range of people including staff and clergy who say they too like taking part in re-enacting Bible stories or by reading and writing prayers. They also say they like church worship as 'parents can come and everyone can worship'. Major occasions such as the church services at Holy Trinity Church for key festivals at Christmas and Easter are very well attended and an important focus of celebration for the whole village community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Shenington pupils can relate the Christian narrative well, explaining key events in their own words. This is especially true of the Christmas and Easter story. Young children can recognise the similarities and differences between the stories of Moses and Noah and the importance of 'praying to God'. Older pupils explore how 'Jesus always showed authority' and how 'people immediately knew he was God' from studying key Bible texts. However they are less secure in their understanding of key events such as Ascension and Pentecost. Whilst RE teaching has a strong focus on Christianity, as is expected in a church school, the children are receiving appropriate teaching about the other world faiths, such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. Teaching and learning in RE and accurate monitoring is consistently good and in line with other core subjects, contributing to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Thus, RE makes a good contribution to the whole curriculum. RE is well led and managed by the enthusiastic RE subject leader who is newly in post. Assessment is in place

and tracking in line with other core subjects. Pupils say they enjoy asking important questions. They speak of the value of meeting people of faith, saying they would like 'more visitors than we do now and more trips to places of worship'. Some cite a visit to the synagogue when they were younger and of how they would like to do this again. The school acknowledges this as a focus for development. In addition, they know how to improve in their work with targets and steps to success.

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

Christian values are at the root of all decision making at Shenington, where a strong sense of family is fostered. Pastoral care is a high priority, with foundation governors ensuring the response to the challenge of community life is met with Christian compassion and direction. The Christian vision of the school's leaders drive the school development. The school's vision is modelled by the whole staff. This makes clear to all the importance of the school's chosen Christian values. There is a newly constituted governing body in place. Careful induction has ensured that all governors are committed to ensuring that every person, whether adult or child, whatever their background or family circumstances, flourishes in this caring Christian environment. Parents comment on how everyone is welcomed, where there is 'no stigma to growing up. Faith does not divide you, it unites you'. They praise 'the respect for other's beliefs and the space to be who you are'. They speak highly of the headteacher and how she leads her team 'in an amazing way'. In addition, there was training on homophobic bullying in the spring term and policies are in place, underpinning the school's inclusive Christian ethos. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed and there are clear priorities for future action and development. This includes supporting training needs for staff, who are growing in leadership skills at all levels of responsibility. Shenington has benefitted greatly from diocesan support and training. RE and worship are carefully monitored as part of the school improvement plan. The new RE subject leader is well supported by the head, assistant head and through diocesan training. RE and worship therefore meet statutory requirements. Local links with nearby schools are strong through the Warriner Partnership, chaired by Shenington's head. The school joins the local community in key celebrations with children selling poppies around the village for The Royal British Legion. In addition, children's letters to unknown soldiers are used to commemorate Remembrance-tide in church, celebrating the partnership between church, school and community.

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