



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The Methodist Church 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Cuthbert's Church of England Infants School

Keward Walk

Wells

Somerset

BA5 1TZ

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Date of inspection: 10th July 2014

Date of last inspection: Not previously inspected as an academy

School's unique reference number: 123778

Headteacher: Mr David Mumford

Inspector's name and number: Muriel Griffiths 268

School context

St Cuthbert's is a small Infant school academy with 120 pupils, in the city of Wells. The majority of children are White British. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is below average. There are no children with statements. The proportion of children receiving Pupil Premium is currently 21% and their attainment is well above the national average gap. This gap has narrowed in the last two years. The headteacher will be leaving at the end of the current school year and a new headteacher has recently been appointed.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Cuthbert's as a Church of England Infant school are good

Established strengths

- The high level of care, dedication and trust, reflecting the school's Christian values, given by the headteacher and staff which enables all children to gain confidence and experience personal success.
- The part played by collective worship and religious education (RE) in promoting the school's distinctive Christian character.
- The good relationships between the children and adults based on distinctive Christian values that promotes their personal development and wellbeing.

Areas to improve

- Provide more opportunities for children to plan and lead worship so that they are more actively involved and there is greater impact.
- Develop a core set of Christian values with stakeholders, in order to further embed the Christian ethos.
- Promote children's understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in Britain's

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

St Cuthbert's is an inclusive, friendly and caring community in which children feel valued and safe. Christian values and principles are central to the life of the school through the Golden Rules. This has a very positive effect on academic attainment and achievement. The school shows good awareness of those vulnerable children with barriers to learning through additional support and clear differentiation. The school has focused on improving children's attendance through a number of initiatives, such as class certificates, for the best attendance, and the fact that they enjoy coming to school has also helped attendance to improve. Children are proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about what they are learning and the range of interesting activities in school. The ethos creates a secure, inclusive Christian environment in which all children are cherished and valued as individuals. Children listen respectfully to one another in an atmosphere of openness and trust. Relationships through the school are good and the children are keen to explain that kindness is very important in school and that 'everyone is kind to each other'. Kindness was chosen by the children as one of the school's six rules. Children are very caring to one another because of the excellent role models provided by adults in school. RE and collective worship contribute well to children's spiritual and moral development. The RE curriculum strongly promotes Christianity and children also learn about Hinduism and the importance of respecting people of other faiths. However, there is little awareness of people of other faiths and diverse communities in Britain. In an RE lesson observed on the day of the inspection, children listened to the story of Jesus' first miracle when water was turned into wine. There were good opportunities provided for children to reflect and empathise with the people in the story when there was no wine at the wedding. Children were able to use appropriate words such as 'worried', 'unhappy' and 'angry'. Spiritual awareness is also promoted well in the school's environment. Each classroom has a reflective area, known as a prayer corner, and children have many opportunities to write their own prayers. Following a recent visit to Avalon, for example, year 2 children wrote prayers for the earth. In the attractive school grounds there is a sensory garden and many places where children can quietly sit and be calm and reflective. The school has introduced a number of initiatives in response to the focus for development from the previous inspection which was 'to strengthen children's spiritual awareness by ensuring that the Christian principles underpinning moral values are always explicit'. One such initiative was that children have been helped to value the recognition of their positive attitudes in twice weekly celebrations of achievement and relate this to appropriate Bible stories. Children appreciate these celebrations, 'Then and Now' and 'The Golden Book', where they are rewarded for both academic achievement and acts of thoughtfulness and kindness linked to the Christian values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a special time in the day at St Cuthbert's. Worship plays a key role in promoting the school's Christian values. For their age, children have good understanding of the effect that the values have on their behaviour and care for one another. Children say that they enjoy worship because 'it is a special time when we learn about Jesus' and 'listen to stories from the Bible'. The School Council has been involved in evaluation of worship and say that they would like more active involvement in planning and leading as well as acting out Bible stories. They especially enjoy visits from the Open the Book team, which as well as helping children to become familiar with stories from the Bible, provides good opportunities for children to get to know local Christians. Worship makes a meaningful contribution to children's spiritual and moral development as observed during the inspection, when the headteacher helped children to think about Moses, who trusted God for help when he was to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Children used the quiet time for reflection to consider what 'believing in themselves' meant and had time to explore their own thoughts. The ethos for worship is promoted well with a worship table and children say that lighting the candle 'helps

the hall to feel like a church'. Worship on the day of the inspection was very appropriate to the age of the children and as a result children were well engaged in all aspects of worship. Children choose the song for collective worship and also write prayers which they lead. The school celebrates Christian festivals in church and parents and grandparents appreciate invitations to join their children on these occasions. Children are proud to contribute to planning and being actively involved at such times as Christmas, Easter and their annual Leavers' Service. Since the previous inspection, the school has addressed the focus for development relating to the annual worship plan. The school now gives a stronger and clearer reinforcement of the Christian message through the theme in collective worship and this is also linked to class activities. Children are also beginning to show some understanding of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through considering it in collective worship.

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

The school has a clear Christian vision which has been developed earlier in the school year by staff, and has a positive impact on the life of the school. The headteacher and staff work closely to ensure that the Christian values are at the heart of the school. However, the school community has yet to develop a set of core, distinctive Christian values with which it can closely identify. Governors are supportive of the school's Christian character and have carried out an ethos walk to consider how distinctive the school is as one with a Church of England foundation, as well as various monitoring and evaluation throughout the year, such as by joining the school for collective worship. Governors are committed to the school's Christian foundation. The headteacher and a governor have recently undertaken training by the diocese. Foundation governors and the vicar visit the school regularly both formally and informally. The curate and the vicar are well involved in the school, leading worship and providing much valued pastoral support. Children visit the local church regularly and the school choir sang at the Cathedral Carol service. These visits provide valuable opportunities for pupils to increase their experience of the Christian Church and those who belong to it. Parents like the links with the church and appreciate the importance of the Christian values and the inclusive nature of the school. They like the way that children care for one another. They feel that 'staff are passionate about their classes'. The school development plan shows areas for improvement relating to the school's Christian distinctiveness and clearly shows the schedule for addressing them in order to move the school forward. By doing this, the school has addressed a focus for development from the previous inspection. There is a good commitment by the school to ensure that the children have every opportunity to flourish in both their academic and personal development.