



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Clifton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cross Side
Clifton
Ashbourne
DE6 2GJ

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 28 April 2016

Date of last inspection: 18 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 112811

Headteacher: Heidi Davies

Inspector's name and number: Alison Woodhouse 777

School context

Clifton Primary is a small village school, split between two buildings and housing four classrooms. The school benefits from using the local Clifton hall across the road to serve dinners during the lunch hour. There are currently 106 pupils on roll of which almost all are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. Holy Trinity church is a short walk from the school and is currently without a vicar. A full time senior teacher was appointed in September 2015.

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

- Strong leadership, rooted in Christian principles, has enhanced the Christian character of the school and created a culture of shared leadership among all staff.
- Relationships between all members of the school community and the local churches are strong and effective.
- Excellent teamwork amongst the staff ensures this village school is at the heart of its community and serves everyone well.

Areas to improve

- Embed effective prayer spaces in classrooms and around school for quiet reflection and prayer to enrich the spiritual development of learners.
- Give pupils more opportunities to create, lead and evaluate worship, so that their own personal spiritual journey is valued.
- Embed formal systems for governors to monitor and evaluate collective worship and religious education (RE) so the impact of actions may be more readily assessed.

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

Clifton is a happy, caring and inclusive school where the staff act as exemplary role models. The relationships with the children are based on Christian principles and reflected in both school policies and key displays. The school vision is clear that it aims to 'develop individual personalities, based upon a Christian foundation.' This has created an atmosphere of trust in school where pupils know that fairness is an intrinsic part of expectations of behaviour. Pupils describe their school as 'kind and friendly with good behaviour,' and they attribute this to the way all teachers are fair and deal effectively with any issues which arise. They talk enthusiastically about 'gold book assembly,' and 'pay it forward,' as examples of where Christian values are lived out in the life of the school. As a result attendance is good and pupils achieve well both academically and in their personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) arises from the whole ethos of the school and from the commitment shown by each member of staff. Staff are mutually supportive of each other and describe Clifton 'as a family where they are keen to live out the Christian values.'

Opportunities to discuss and relate to Christian values are offered through a Personal Social Health Emotional (PSHE) scheme of work and RE. This enables pupils to gain an increasing insight into other cultures and has been significantly enhanced by the school's tangible link with schools in India. The RE leader is central in these links as she visited India with the Diocese to ensure the links would be both genuine and mutually beneficial. These features ensure that pupils are fully aware that Christianity is a multicultural world faith and deepens their understanding for diversity in all faith communities. Other aspects of school life such as the school council and eco committee give pupils opportunities to look after each other and the wider community. The impact of this is evident in the recognition of pupils taking part in events such as the 'powerful pencil case challenge' and 'clean for the Queen,' developing spirituality through caring for others and the natural world. Parents speak highly of their children's personal development and achievement. One parent said, 'the Christian ethos is heart-warming, it never leaves you.' They feel fully aware and informed about the school's Christian character as they spoke confidently about how it is reflected on the website and similarly appreciated the fact that their views are sought and reflected in school practice.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The daily act of collective worship is well planned and enjoyed by all the children. Acts of worship are clearly Anglican in their character, including prayer, teaching based on the Bible and time for reflection. Themes are identified at the start of the school year and incorporate the Anglican festivals. The pupils enjoy their involvement in leading worship in church and collective worship as a whole has recently been evaluated by the collective worship leader. Visiting worship leaders from Ashbourne Churches Together present the school community with a good knowledge of Bible stories and the life of Jesus. Close links with the church enable the children to learn about Anglican traditions and they enjoy their regular visits to local churches of Ashbourne. This means the development point of 'introduce other denominations in worship,' has been fully met from the previous inspection. Pupils, therefore, have some understanding of Anglican traditions, but have as yet little awareness of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Parents value the close links with the church, commenting that all services are 'fully inclusive,' and they especially appreciate the work of the church and parish council to ensure a path was marked out between Holy Trinity church and the school. Worship is integral to the school's vision and pupils particularly enjoy writing and reading their own prayers as well as volunteering to help with leading worship. Prayer and time for reflection are appreciated by adults and children and opportunities for these are offered at lunchtime and home time as well as during worship. Regular evaluation is in its early stages as the new leader only took up her post in September 2015. In her role she is keen to develop a new approach to daily worship based upon 'seeing anew' and there is open and constructive discussion on areas for improvement between the clergy, governors and the staff. Nonetheless the impact of evaluating worship is in its infancy.

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

The headteacher provides excellent care for all members of the school community and this is seen as a great strength of the school by parents and governors. The strong and supportive governing body knows the school well through a sincere commitment to make the school the best that it can be. Governors are involved in the whole life of the school, although they are currently working without a vicar or a foundation governor. Their close relationships with the staff and pupils set a good example of the Christian ethos at work in the school community. Governors articulate clearly how the schools' Christian values permeate every aspect of school life and this is reflected on the website addressing a development point from the previous inspection. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governors contribute significantly to the success of Clifton school. The headteacher works closely with the Diocese and the local authority and takes every opportunity for training and the sharing of good practice. Since the last inspection the school has been featured in the Derby Diocesan newsletter as a good example of promoting friendship amongst the school community. The school has strong links with the local churches and this partnership is especially effective during this period where Holy Trinity church is waiting to appoint a new vicar. Leadership roles and appropriate professional development opportunities are provided for staff within this small school. Recent examples being the appointment of a full time senior teacher and supporting the RE leader to visit Kolkata with the Diocese. The governing body contributes to regular evaluation which informs development planning, and acknowledges the need to formalise this with reference to being a Church of England school with added rigour. All leaders recognise the need to evaluate the school as a Church of England school further to enhance planning for deeper spiritual development through all aspects of school life. The new RE and collective worship leader has the expertise and experience to move these areas forward leaving the school well-placed to achieve the improvements that it genuinely seeks.

SIAMS report April 2016. Clifton VC Primary School, Clifton, Derbyshire, DE6 2GJ