



Type of school (Infant, Primary, Middle, Secondary etc)	Primary
Status (VA, VC or Foundation, CTC or Academy)	Voluntary Aided
Diocese	Oxford
Local Authority	Reading
Date of inspection	22nd March 2010
Date of last inspection	21 st May 2007
School's Unique reference number	132109
Name of Headteacher	Ms Maria Soulsby
Name of Chair of Governors	Mrs Judith Thurlow
Inspector's name and NS inspector's number	Pauline Stanton-Saringer 561

Context

New Christ Church is situated in a residential area just outside the centre of Reading. Of its 162 pupils about a third are of White British heritage while the rest come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds with over 20 different home languages. The number of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is above average. The school has a good reputation in the area and is oversubscribed. It has a higher than average number of pupil movements during the year, but the staffing is now stable.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of New Chris Church Primary school as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The school achieves a totally inclusive, welcoming ethos while having clear and strong links with the parish church. Every learner is nurtured as an individual and is given outstanding opportunity to develop spiritual understanding.

Established strengths

- The outstanding vision and leadership of the headteacher.
- The nurture of each pupil as a valued individual.
- The provision for spiritual development within the life of the school.
- The strong links with the parish church and local community.

Focus for development

- Foundation governor involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of RE and collective worship.

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

The school's pupils come from very diverse cultural backgrounds, but when they are within the school community all pupils say they feel safe, looked after, listened to and that they are part of a family environment. The Rainbow symbol is important to them and they understand that it stands for God's promise of love and care. Everyone is treated as a valued individual because of these consistent underlying Christian values.. They are evident in the way the staff work as a mutually supportive team and in the clear and caring leadership of the headteacher who is "never too busy to listen". Older pupils are seen to take care of younger ones.

Pupils say that they "learn lots" and they look forward to coming to school to learn. The teaching and academic achievement within school are rated as good by Ofsted and the parent questionnaire showed that the vast majority held this view.

One parent used the word "holistic" to describe the ethos of the school. Parents and pupils say that any problems arising in school are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are successfully encouraged to engage with local and national concerns in the weekly "community afternoons". They are also keen to take part in the good range of after school activities offered.

The school has excellent displays which reflect its life and ethos. Most of these involve pupil input. They create a bright environment and provide much food for thought. Each classroom has a special table for reflection which helps to bring the spiritual dimension into the heart of school life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The times of worship together are a vital part of school life.. The atmosphere is quiet and expectant. The vast majority of pupils say they enjoy worship and that it is a special time. They are attentive, responsive and sing enthusiastically. Pupils speak of using the reflective time to pray or think about the theme. Collective worship is well planned and the God's Storyteller material is shown by pupil and staff feedback to be popular and effective. Despite the variety of faith backgrounds, no children are withdrawn from school based worship. This indicates that all feel that their faith is respected within the context of worship. The school manages to be an inclusive community while retaining strong, clear Anglican connections in its worship. The incumbent normally leads collective worship weekly and pupil led services linked to the church year are held in church. Pupils often take a part in collective worship. One is compiling a book of pupils' prayers to use in school worship.

The collective worship seen was an outstanding example of linking the Christian teaching about being the "body of Christ" with the reality experienced by everyone of being part of the "body" of the school. At the close of the day, an excellent class "Candle Time", around the theme of broken promises and forgiveness, gave good opportunities for reflection and sharing. Pupil contributions indicated a real trust among the group and the teacher. Several pupils were ready to say their own prayer simply and confidently.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

There is now a clear tracking process in place and the portfolio of evidence of progress is being compiled. Thus the school has fully addressed the previous focus for development. The tracking has shown that pupils are making at least good progress and that achievement and attainment are at least in line with other core subjects. The RE co-ordinator has worked very hard to re-draft the schemes of work to introduce the locally agreed syllabus. All topics across the curriculum have clear links with RE- for example water and rivers and special food. Teaching time for RE is maintained by careful monitoring. All staff deliver RE and are confident to do so because they feel very well supported individually by the co-ordinator through discussion and supply of resources.

Two very different lessons were seen - one involving Godly Play. Both lessons showed the outstanding level of delivery and attitude to RE in the school. In both lessons all pupils were actively engaged and participating. They were clearly used to thinking around the subject – both classes were asked to consider emotions experienced by people in Gethsemane or on the walk to Calvary. In ways appropriate to their age, both classes were able to express these in art or by acting.

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

The headteacher's vision for New Christ Church as a church school is outstanding. She is very successful in transmitting this vision to her staff and governors. All staff are well inducted and lead by example in putting Christian values into action. The clear mission statement is used as the standard against which all policies are framed and revised. Everyone in school understands that they are valued as an individual.

There are outstanding links between school and parish. The incumbent plays a vital role in this as pastor as well as worship leader. A growing number of pupils are attending family services and each year brings more confirmation candidates from the school. Staff speak of their own spiritual growth helped by the worship, the incumbent, and by being part of the supportive community.

All pupils are given excellent opportunities for spiritual and personal development. Many aspects of school life contribute to this: RE, collective worship, candle time, celebration assemblies, the consistent example of the staff. The excellent behaviour of the pupils and the absence of bullying are indications that pupils are taking the opportunities offered. The RE co-ordinator has a very clear vision for establishing the subject within the whole curriculum. Parents from all faiths are very supportive and appreciate the ethos of the school and its inclusive provision.

The governors clearly share the vision for the school. While they are often in school, it is not necessarily in a monitoring capacity. The foundation governors are not yet fully engaged with the evaluation of RE and collective worship.