



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Lea Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Lea  
Ross on Wye  
Herefordshire  
HR9 7JY

**Previous SIAS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Hereford

Local authority: Herefordshire

Dates of inspection: 5 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 19 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 116892

Headteacher: Linda Townsend

Inspector's name and number: Karen Surrall 842

#### School context

Lea CE Primary school is a small rural primary school with 110 pupils on roll and with an on-site preschool. This is run by the governors and managed by the headteacher. The number of children on roll in receipt of free school meals or who are more vulnerable is above national average. Some year groups have up to 50% of children on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) register. The school has close links with the local church, with a new incumbent due to take up the post of Rector later this year.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lea Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The school's fierce determination to provide the best education for its pupils, whatever their starting points, grounded in its distinctive Christian character.
- The behaviour of the children is excellent. This is because it is founded on high expectations and aspirations which are rooted in the school's Christian character.
- The commitment of the school to serve its local community so that all stakeholders are able to share its vision and values.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop values which are understood by all stakeholders to be rooted in the Christian faith and are explicitly taught through worship, religious education (RE) and are planned for throughout the curriculum.
- Involve children more regularly in the planning and leading of worship, together with monitoring by all stakeholders, so that worship has an impact on the whole community.
- Ensure all staff, including leaders within the school, have sufficient training to enable them to deliver a high quality RE curriculum that is engaging, exciting and based on the school's Christian values, making a consistent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding.

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

The school's very clear vision of its place at the heart of the community enables it to understand the challenges facing all stakeholders. The school prides itself on 'going the extra mile' for children and families. Its motto of 'Everybody Counts' is seen by all as fundamental to its work as a church school. Staff are committed to meeting the needs of every child and strenuous steps are taken to ensure that all groups of children make good academic progress. The distinctively Christian character of the school underpins strategic decisions so that the academic and emotional needs of pupils are effectively addressed. Children are actively encouraged to take action in the service of others both within school and in the wider community. Year 5 children cheerfully assist the Reception children at lunchtime, seeing their role as 'Rainbow helpers' to be a privilege and a pleasure and part of being a church school. The school's values have been in place for a number of years and are currently being reviewed by all stakeholders with a renewed focus on the Christian foundation of the values. The school has a clear understanding of spirituality with one child defining it as 'being true to God and yourself'. This has a daily impact on relationships within the school, enabling all stakeholders to feel supported as part of a family. Children have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities and talk knowledgeably about other faiths and cultures. They understand the need to respect others' views and readily link these with their RE lessons and the Christian character of the school. There is currently insufficient understanding by all stakeholders of how the teaching of RE can contribute to pupils' SMSC development, resulting in a lack of focus on the school's values when planning lessons. The school environment supports the children's SMSC development through the wide spread use of reflection areas inside and out. A 'time out' area at the heart of the school enables pupils, whose behaviour has fallen below the school's high expectations, to reflect on how they can do better before re-joining their peers. As a result, behaviour throughout the school is excellent and attributed by all to the Christian character of the school. At present, these reflection areas do not always have a clear focus on the school's values. Children see these as a 'lovely place to be peaceful' and 'they help you to think about how you can make things better'. RE lessons ensure that all children, whatever their background, have a high level of respect and understanding for diverse communities. As a result of regular visits to churches of different denominations, within the local area, pupils have a good understanding of the variety of Christian worship throughout the world.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Worship is seen to play an important role in the life of the school. Team assemblies of mixed age groups enable all children to explore the values of the school in depth and to learn from each other. These often have a biblical theme and children enjoy exploring Bible stories through the use of drama and role play. Children are now ready to plan and lead whole school acts of worship. Monitoring of the impact of collective worship by governors is not rigorous enough to bring about sustained improvement. Children can make links between worship time and the school's values. However, planning for collective worship does not allow for the coherent development of Christian themes so that the values of the school are regularly set out in their Christian context. All stakeholders are proud of the close links with the local church. These have strengthened considerably since the last inspection and despite the lack of an incumbent, weekly worship in the church has continued. 'They see it as their church' said one parent explaining why her children were choosing to be baptized there. The worship area in school is dominated by the 'Values Tree' which encourages all children to reflect on how the current value can affect their daily lives. Collective worship often includes biblical teaching and learners are sometimes able to make links between these and their lives. One child commented about the current value of freedom. 'God could do what he wants but he chose to send Jesus. We sometimes have to make difficult choices.' Children have a limited understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinity. The Anglican foundation of the school is celebrated well, so that children have a good understanding of the Lord's prayer and other aspects of liturgy. Prayer is a regular feature in the life of the school and children use these times to reflect on their daily lives and behaviour.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

Most children enjoy their RE lessons, seeing them as a place where they can explore new ideas, share their thoughts openly and learn about different faiths and cultures. Learners are confident to discuss their ideas and are very respectful of each other's thoughts and viewpoints. Standards of attainment in RE are in line with national expectations and children make expected progress. As a result, children have a secure knowledge, understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures. Where teaching is good there are clear links between how Jesus' life can be relevant today and how his example can help in the application of the school's values. However, this is not so for much of the teaching. There is a lack of differentiation so that the more able children are not able to progress as quickly as they might. Written tasks are often not challenging enough to enable children to show their deep level of understanding and standards are not as high as those seen in other subjects. There are insufficient planned occasions to explore the school's values in the light of the RE syllabus. The headteacher also takes the lead in RE, although another member of staff is being trained to assume this role. Monitoring by the headteacher and by the governors accurately identifies priorities for improvement but is not sufficiently rigorous to raise standards of attainment in RE for all groups of children.

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

All stakeholders are able to articulate a clear vision for this church school, based on the school's values. They readily attribute the ethos of the school to the strong leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of all the staff so that the children feel valued by all. Leaders are clear in their desire to serve the community and this is driven by a developing Christian vision. The headteacher and governors are very mindful of their place within a fellowship of other local church schools and plan strategically to ensure all the children within it thrive. The planned programme of visits for pupils includes the seaside, other Christian churches, bus trips and a visit to a restaurant for the year 6 pupils so that all children are able to extend their horizons. These contribute well to the pupils' SMSC development and are seen by leaders to be the fruit of the school's vision as a church school. Parents are clear that being a church school makes a difference to the caring and nurturing that their children receive. 'Little things are noticed and rewarded' commented one parent, with another adding 'there is a close family feel, the children are treated equally.' The excellent behaviour of all pupils is consistently attributed to the school's Christian vision where expectations and aspirations are high. Parents, the local church and the wider community all play a very full role in the life of the school. This results in pupils who have a clear understanding of their place nationally and as global citizens. Worship, RE and the curriculum are informed by the school's distinctive Christian character but their foundation in the school's values is not yet explicit enough to have an impact on pupils' SMSC development. Self-evaluation of standards is robust and leads to prompt action. Where academic results need to be improved then scarce resources are speedily put in place resulting in rapid improvement. An example of this is the improved number of children reaching the expected standard in phonics at the end of year 1. Governors see the school's distinctive Christian character as fundamental to their duty to meet the needs of all learners. Diocesan training for both governors and staff has had clear benefits for the pupils, encouraging pupils to support many worthy causes, currently Amnesty International. The school has made good progress against the areas for development in the last report and meets the statutory requirements for worship and for the teaching of RE.

SIAMS report May 2016 Lea C of E (VA) Primary School Ross on Wye HR9 7JY