



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Huntley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Ross Road,  
Huntley,  
GL19 3EX

**Previous inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Gloucester**

Local authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 17 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 5 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 115686

Headteacher: Madeleine Owen

Inspector's name and number: David Scorer 841

#### School context

Huntley Church of England VA Primary School is a small primary school with 90 children. The majority of the children are drawn from the surrounding area. Most children come from white British heritage. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national average as is the number of children eligible for pupil premium and free school meals. There have been significant changes to the governing body since the last inspection, however the staffing has been broadly consistent throughout this time.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Huntley VA as a Church of England school are good

- All stakeholders articulate the school's inclusive nature and the high quality care given to all members of the school community.
- The explicit Christian messages delivered through engaging collective worship in a variety of formats, contribute to the children's spiritual awareness.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

#### Areas to improve

- Embed the recently refined school's core Christian values with high quality experiences for the children to explore, evaluating their impact to refine the provision.
- Refine and develop the school's assessment scrutiny and feedback of pupils' work in religious education (RE) to support the high quality planning of lessons and further raise standards of attainment.
- Formally record the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of recent initiatives by senior leaders and governors, to clearly identify success and areas of improvement, which inform school development planning.

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

Huntley is a welcoming and caring Christian community. The school's written vision of 'Be the best we can' permeates all aspects of pupils' achievements academically, spiritually, socially and morally. Following a recent revision by all stakeholders, there is a clear focus on twelve Christian values, which are referred to by all members of the community. As a result, all school stakeholders have a clear value led focus, providing the children with increasingly memorable and effective learning. The school is not yet outstanding because there has been insufficient time for the newly selected values to be formally evaluated in the daily life of the school. Children are very clear about the importance of the school's Christian values in their lives. One example was stated by a child who said 'We must always show forgiveness, even if someone has made the same mistake'. Furthermore, children are actively encouraged to live out the school's Christian values. Careful curriculum planning and reflective areas around the school provide numerous opportunities for spiritual development. For example, a prayer net display is used by the children to 'hook on a thought for others' at any point in the school day. One child stated 'we are never really alone, even if it looks like we are, God is always there to listen to us'. Positive attitudes from all stakeholders towards the school community and the wider world are clearly evident. Parents particularly comment on the school's involvement in fostering links, both with the local church and beyond. For example, the school has forged a positive relationship with Maina School in Kenya, which has provided numerous opportunities for both children and staff to fundraise. A 'Toast Bar' encourages the children to provide financial support for students to attend school, as well as raise the children's understanding and awareness of the world around them. The school's Christian ethos, collective worship and RE are effective in supporting children's spiritual, moral and social development. In a Key Stage Two RE lesson, the children were comparing religious beliefs from two different faiths, and were designing their own 'Game of Life'. One child compared her life to the board game 'Snakes and Ladders' and explained 'life is like a game where you climb ladders to success, and the snakes are the challenges I face that I try not to slip down'. Children are developing their understanding of Christianity as a multicultural faith and know that it is important to show respect to people of faiths different from their own.

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

Collective worship holds an important and central place of importance at Huntley. It plays a vital role in promoting the school's Christian values, which the children learn about through Bible stories, and relate to their own lives. As a result, the key messages permeate all aspects of school life and pupils value the range of opportunities available to them. Children are involved in the planning and delivery of worship, which makes it powerful and relevant to their own lives. The bowl of pebbles is a constant reminder of the importance of being individually valued, with one child stating that 'each pebble is different, just like us, but we are all part of the Huntley family'. Worship is a time of quiet and stillness in the school day, whilst at the same time being highly interactive with questioning and singing. High levels of engagement are fostered: for example, for the day of the inspection Key Stage Two children had planned and then led collective worship based around the theme of the school's current Christian value of Forgiveness, as scheduled in the school's collective worship planning. The children also have good opportunities to take part in drama and story telling which further encourages high levels of engagement. Evaluation of the impact of child-led worship has enabled the children to grow in confidence over time. Earlier self evaluations have helped pupils identify areas for development so that 'we are better at helping others think about what is right, using Bible stories'. Parents speak favourably about the school's celebration services, which are held throughout the year at the parish church. A particular highlight is the 'Founders Service', which often sees pupils of past and present gather together and celebrate. Prayer is also an important part of the school day beyond collective worship with children actively able to display their sound understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, demonstrated by their ability to explain the significance of each of the three persons of the Godhead.

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

Standards attained in RE since the last inspection are good and are at least in line with national expectations. However, senior leaders have not measured or moderated progress trends over time in the subject and they have not formalised detailed monitoring and evaluation in RE to inform the school's future development. RE lessons are planned to ensure that children learn about Christianity and there is an appropriate emphasis on the stories of Jesus. As a result, the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity is good. Opportunities for lessons to promote the Christian values of the school, as well as developing the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, are carefully planned. In this way the children use originality and creativity in applying their skills in RE to provide responses to the 'Big Questions' about meaning and purpose. Formal assessment procedures are supported by the school's 'Big Book' approach which records the children's learning throughout the year. However the school's marking and feedback procedures are under review, and do not yet support the high quality planning of lessons in order to further raise standards of attainment. Planning and curriculum coverage is carefully mapped to ensure both that pupils' needs are met and that there are good opportunities for using prior learning and enquiry skills. As a result pupils enjoy RE lessons, with one child stating 'I like learning about the differences in people all around the world but also how we are sometimes the same'. The children's understanding of Christianity as a world wide faith is a strength, particularly highlighted by pupils' engagement in the partnership with the Maina school in Kenya. Senior leaders have attended a variety of diocesan courses ensuring that the school is up-to-date with recent educational developments in the subject and are developing an RE hub to share good practice and expertise. While governors are aware of what is happening in RE, through a dedicated Ethos committee, formal monitoring and evaluation does not yet directly influence the subject or show clear impact on school development.

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

The headteacher, together with staff and governors, have ensured that the school has addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection report. The governors express their support for the way the school is promoting its Christian ethos, particularly through the Ethos committee. It is not yet outstanding because, despite being clear about areas to improve, the monitoring and evaluation of recent initiatives is not formalised and does not therefore lead directly to improvement. The senior leaders' Christian vision for the school is highlighted by the headteacher's desire to 'develop the whole child beyond academic standards, in a school where our Christian values underpin all we do'. As a result, all members of staff work as a cohesive team and strive to provide high quality learning experiences for the children. This is particularly recognised by the parents who speak highly of the school's role in 'shaping their children for the future with a strong moral foundation and integrity in all they do'. A core set of values has recently been reviewed based on the Christian vision for the school. These were agreed following wide consultation which included the whole school community. As a result, the school's Christian values have become even more firmly embedded, and have had an impact on the improvement of the school's academic attainment. They are also having a significant impact on the whole community, with parents citing the school's values as a key reason for how their children 'display respect for each other and the world around them'. There is an effective partnership with parents who describe the school as having a clear Christian vision that 'creates strong relationships and a welcoming atmosphere'. The local church reader sees the school as 'part of the church building itself' and works closely with the school to 'build the foundations for the future, on solid Christian foundations'. This is highlighted by the school's involvement in the heart of the community, as well as the high attendance at Christian festival services. The governors understand the need to prepare for future leadership and this has brought measurable success. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet the statutory requirements.