



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Buckland Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Buckland
Faringdon
Oxfordshire
SN7 8RB

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Date of inspection: 21 January 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 123145

Headteacher: Louise Warren

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter

School context

This rural primary school serves a wide area with over half the pupils travelling from out of catchment. Currently there are 98 pupils on roll with 10 pupils in the nursery. Almost all pupils are from a white British background. There is a smaller than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and those in receipt of pupil premium funding. There are a small number of children from families serving in HM Armed Forces. In October 2013, the school became part of the Faringdon Multi Academy Trust. A new parish priest has been in post from September 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Buckland Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- This welcoming and inclusive Christian community is built firmly upon Christian values, enabling children and adults to grow together as one family.
- Strong leadership and good governance ensures the Christian character of the school permeates all school life.
- The worshipping life of the school, exemplified by the partnership between church and school, is valued by the children and families whom it serves.

Areas to improve

- Deepen pupils' understanding of the worldwide Christian church and embed the programme of visits and visitors to enable pupils to meet more people of faith. This enhances their learning and nurtures their spiritual and cultural development.

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

Buckland Primary School creates an inspirational learning environment which successfully embodies 'small, school, big hearts, encouraging outstanding learning', firmly built upon upholding Christian values daily. The current core Christian values of wisdom, kindness and responsibility are well articulated by the whole school community, including the youngest children. Relationships are excellent because all members of this family Christian community continually and consistently show care and kindness. As a result, pupils thrive in the Christian culture and ethos which this school creates, positively encouraging its pupils and preparing them exceptionally well for life. Exclusions are not part of this church school's ethos where attendance is very good and well above the national average. Strong behaviour and anti-bullying policies and practice are firmly in place, with a very strong emphasis on all being made in the image of God. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school, are proud to belong, feel valued and loved and achieve very highly. Indeed, achievement is excellent throughout the school, with the school enjoying being in the top 5% in the country for reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2. Vulnerable children are carefully monitored and supported and there is a high level of challenge for very able pupils. The school attributes this to their Christian values at the heart of a rich curriculum which engenders love, co-operation and learning together where everyone achieves. Consequently, pupils grow in their self-belief to be like Concentrate Connie and Have a go Herb. A range of extra-curricular activities, including sport and music, which are strengths of the school, greatly enrich pupil's experiences, such as the boys' guitar group. Regular fundraising for charities, such as the Joshua Foundation, supporting people in Malawi, enable pupils to experience the Christian values of service and generosity. Pupils show respect for diverse cultures and beliefs through religious education [RE] and worship, which make very good contributions to the school's Christian character and to pupils' personal development. RE enjoys a high profile, often taught through RE days, and is valued by the pupils who show a good level of religious literacy. They can relate the Christian narrative well and are able to explain incarnation, salvation and the role of St Mary, after whom their church is dedicated, in their own words. Excellent examples include pupils discussing, 'Should Christians worship Mary?' with a member of the clergy who is also a foundation governor. They also ask important questions, such as 'Do religious people lead better lives?' and 'Is God made man a good way to understand the Christmas story?' Termly Godly Play lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils say this 'helps them understand all the parts of when Jesus was born'. However, the school acknowledges that deepening pupils' understanding of the worldwide Christian church, working with those families who come from outside the British Isles, is a positive way forward. It also recognises that embedding the programme of visits and visitors already experienced, enhances pupils' learning and nurtures spiritual and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The worshipping life of this community is an integral part of its daily life and work. It is an important coming together of the whole school community. This worship is rooted in Christian values, such as hope and happiness, prayer and Bible stories and the liturgical church year. It greatly enriches pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' knowledge of the seasons of the church year is very strong as well as the symbolism of baptism and communion. Buckland Primary is

very well served by the clergy, including their new parish priest and the partnership with St Mary's Church is very strong. The clergy are very welcome and regular visitors to school. Year 6 pupils are given a Bible by the Parochial Church Council [PCC] every year. These Bibles are well used by these pupils in daily worship as is the three-wicked candle and the saying of The Grace. Consequently, pupils are growing in their understanding of The Holy Trinity, saying 'collective worship is a peaceful time to sit and talk to God and Jesus'. They think of God as creator, Jesus as saviour and the Holy Spirit as life-giver. They explain, 'God the Father is our father, God the Son is Jesus and God the Holy Spirit is the spirit of us in our body'. Outdoor services for Ascension and Pentecost help pupils understand the importance of these key Christian festivals. The new outdoor prayer hut, to be blessed by the Archdeacon of Dorchester later this term, is well used by pupils if they 'feel like alone-time'. Calm moments at the start of every afternoon for the youngest children enable them to reflect as they prepare to start work again. The school field has also been used for meditation. Parents say that collective worship is very much focussed on wider events, such as praying for the Syrian refugees. The recent Mary Posada encouraged families to pray together at home. Year 6 pupils enjoy the responsibility of preparing the worship space as well as daily recording their personal thoughts on worship. Younger pupils cite them as 'good role models'. Pupils can record their reflections in a special book and annual surveys all help to inform the direction of travel for the future. Worship is monitored weekly by the headteacher to ensure its quality and impact. This demonstrates that all staff lead worship and pupils, especially Year 6 worship co-ordinators, plan, lead and evaluate worship.

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

At Buckland Primary the headteacher and governors have a strong Christian vision for the school. Consequently, core Christian values are central to the strategic direction of the school. Three key foundation governors, including two members of the clergy, are on the standards committee. Here, prayer and distinctive Christian values are always at the heart of the agenda. Such commitment is instrumental to the life of this school, with the new parish priest finding new ways to develop church/school links. Excellent partnerships exist between school and church. The school is very well served by the clergy, who go above and beyond what is expected of them by their frequency in school. This has especially been true in the last eighteen months. Parents speak highly of the respect and reverence there is for the church. The school choir sang with the church choir at Christmas for the Nine Lessons and Carols service. Pupils decorate the children's chapel in St Mary's Church with their Spirited Arts work. Newsletters successfully promote the school's Christian values to parents with a Bible quote to help make the link to Jesus' teaching. Parents are encouraged to be part of school worship and members of the congregation helped with prayer walks in the church and vicarage garden. A worship labyrinth, on loan from the diocese, was used in the village hall. Community links are very good. Parents attribute this to the Christian values of the school, creating a strong sense of responsibility, for example, towards the elderly at Harvest. Such community involvement pushes boundaries and strongly supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE and collective worship are led by the headteacher, showing the importance of these two key areas of school life. RE and worship are monitored regularly and robustly and are an important part of the cycle of review. Raising achievement goes hand in hand with living out Christian values. Buckland has felt the benefit of being part of the Faringdon Academy of schools, well supported by the diocese, whilst retaining its own distinctiveness as a small, rural school. This includes developing links with the church and support for future leadership of church schools. As a result, RE and worship are well led, managed and resourced and meet statutory requirements. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed, with new priorities for future development. Governors successfully promote the wellbeing of all staff, including those teaching assistants newly in post, valuing them and supporting their training needs. Pupils' wellbeing is a high priority. Indeed, pupils have a voice on the school council. Very good examples include two Year 6 pupils who set up their own friendship club for younger pupils.

Parents testify to their happy children enjoying being 'part of one enormous family, where the older ones take responsibility for the younger ones. They even embrace bad things and move on and learn together'. Pupils say they reflect on The Good Samaritan if anyone should experience meanness and is in need of help.

SIAMS report Buckland CE VC Primary School, Buckland, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8RB