



Midhurst CE Primary School

Diocese of Chichester

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report



Date of inspection:	5th & 10th October 2011
Name of inspector:	Christopher Todd
NS inspector's number:	554
School address:	Ashfield Road Midhurst GU29 9JX
Unique reference number:	125988
Status:	Voluntary Controlled
Number on roll:	208
Age range of pupils:	4-11
LA:	West Sussex
Name of chair of governors:	Edward Roberts
Name of headteacher:	Matthew Barnes
Date of previous inspection:	November 2008

The inspection of denominational education and collective worship in the school was carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Description of the school

Midhurst Church of England Primary School is situated in the town of Midhurst, West Sussex and has been on the present site since 1972. Pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are mixed and local housing includes both rented and owner-occupied accommodation. The headteacher has been in post since September 2010 and there have been other recent changes in staffing and on the governing body.

Summary judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Midhurst CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

The school has securely re-established its distinctiveness as a Church school since the last inspection. It has a clear vision of its Christian character and how this makes a difference to the lives of the children. The headteacher and governing body are implementing this vision effectively. There is a strong culture of inclusion and care and support for pupils.

Grade: 2

Established strengths

- The commitment of the headteacher, staff, governors and clergy to strengthen and develop the Christian ethos of the school
- The positive relationships between all those involved in the school which arise from strong Christian values
- The excellent and productive links between the parish church and the school

Focus for development

- Ensure the established Christian foundation of the school is strengthened through a review of the school's aims and values
- Draw together the strands of evaluation of Collective Worship into a formal programme of monitoring

The school meets the statutory requirement for Collective Worship	Yes
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The school, through its distinctive Christian character is good at meeting the needs of all its learners.

Since the last inspection the school has moved forward significantly in their understanding of what it means to be a church school and its Christian character is therefore good at meeting the needs of learners. Progress in this area has been especially strong during the past year with the arrival of the new headteacher. Working as a team, with the staff and governing body, the development of the Christian ethos can be seen through the environment, curriculum and Collective Worship. The school is now at the point of reviewing the school aims and values thus making the Christian foundation even more explicit.

The distinctive ethos of the school has also grown from the way in which its Christian character and the needs of the whole child are woven together. The school provides a strong supportive environment for all its pupils and values their social, moral and spiritual development equally with their academic achievements. Children speak with confidence when talking about their beliefs and opinions and listen with appreciation to each other as they explore issues of faith. They treat each other with respect and sensitivity because that is the way they are treated. Children feel safe in the school environment because they know that teachers are there for them if they need help or support. Displays entitled 'Gallery of Greats' and 'Great Oaks from Acorns' provide clear evidence of the affirmation of pupils and the development of their self-esteem. There are also plentiful opportunities for children to take on responsibility through being 'Senior Pupils' or assisting in the many fundraising opportunities. For instance, pupils describe in positive terms their involvement in the Rother Valley School Council and how the many competitions in school "give you a chance to do well."

Grade: 2

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.

In describing the school's Christian distinctiveness, one pupil commented: 'It's special because we worship God in church and at school.' Most pupils say they enjoy worship, especially valuing the sense of community generated by the 'coming together' of the whole school. They appreciate opportunities to take an active part through contributing prayers and acting out Bible stories. Music has a central place in worship and is well led by headteacher and staff, playing both guitar and piano. Pupils clearly enjoy singing, and join wholeheartedly in hymns. They are eager to answer questions and respond well to times of reflection and prayer, displaying respect and thoughtfulness. This was evident in the acts of worship observed which helped them to think about the wonder of creation, and God's care for each individual within it. The lighting of a candle and a cross provide a focal point for the children during worship and they participate well, for instance, in reciting the Lord's Prayer. There is scope for further development through, for example, linking whole school worship to class assemblies or reflection corners but overall worship signifies a special time in the school day for all involved.

The pupils' understanding of Anglican traditions and practice is strengthened further by visits to church at festival times, and parents as well as pupils say how much they enjoy these occasions. Worship in both church and school is very well supported by the parish clergy. Planning of the daily act of worship in school is based on the Church year, and ensures that worship helps pupils to explore themes linked to key Christian teachings and to relate these to their own lives. For example, worship on the theme of Harvest led pupils to reflect upon the Christian value of thankfulness. Since the last inspection some informal review of worship has taken place but the school recognises the need now to draw together the strands of evaluation of collective worship into a formal programme involving all stakeholders.

Grade: 2

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

Since the last inspection, the headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to develop the Christian character of the school with notable success. The aims, the prospectus and website now proclaim its distinctive Christian status. Key policies, such as that for behaviour, are explicitly related to Christian teachings. The planned review of the aims and values of the school provides an opportunity to emphasise and strengthen the school's Christian status and to widen participation in the self evaluation process by including parents and pupils. Self-evaluation by staff and governors, which was a weakness in the previous inspection, is now good. This is reflected in the accurate identification of priorities for development which are now included in the School Development Plan. Further progress could be made through using Diocesan opportunities for professional and spiritual development, enabling both staff and governors to extend the skills and understanding necessary for the leadership of a Church school.

Parents and carers speak positively of their children's experience of the school. They feel strongly that the teaching of Christian values helps their children thrive, emphasises respect and guides them to become responsible citizens. Links with the parish church are well established and the foundation governors make an excellent contribution to the Christian ethos of the school. For example, the vicar and members of the parish church run the 'Solid Rock' after school club which is greatly enjoyed by pupils and has an impact on worship in both the school and parish church. Partnerships with local groups and businesses enhance pupils' learning and contribute very effectively to community cohesion locally. Newer links with schools in Kenya are making pupils aware of different communities globally.

Grade: 2