

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Hanbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

School Lane,
Hanbury,
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 4BS

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 6 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 16 November 2009

School's unique reference number: 116816

Headteacher: Andrew Payne

Inspector's name and number: Stephanie Boulter 785

School context

Hanbury Church of England First School is a smaller than average school serving a rural catchment. There are 121 pupils on roll mostly from a white British background with a number of pupils travelling from Droitwich and Bromsgrove. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is low at 8%. The school has close links with Hanbury Church, Hanbury Hall and the local village community.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hanbury VC First School as a Church of England school are good

- The clear Christian vision of the headteacher ensures that all children are supported in their personal well-being and in their academic achievement
- Relationships are excellent and based on Christian love and care for each individual and contribute to the pupils' exemplary behaviour
- Supportive pastoral care for pupils and staff result in the school community feeling like a family
- There is a strong and mutually beneficial partnership with the local church and village community

Areas to improve

- Develop an explicit shared vision for the school as a distinctive church school so that core Christian values are identified and understood by the whole school community and can be articulated by pupils, staff, parents and governors
- Improve and embed the formal monitoring and evaluation of the impact of Hanbury as a church school by all stakeholders, including governors and leaders. This will allow for effective strategies for improvement and maintain a strong focus on meeting the needs of all learners
- Establish high quality opportunities for the increased development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development across the curriculum, which is planned, monitored and evaluated by all school leaders

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

The Christian character of the school enables and encourages the strong partnership that exists between pupils, staff, parents, church and the wider village community. This is characterised by the pupils' exemplary behaviour and the Christian care that exists between all members of the school. Pupils get on well together and feel part of a welcoming and supportive Christian family. The school's Christian values of endurance, trust, kindness, forgiveness and respect are promoted by the 'Hanbury hand' and are shared and understood by most stakeholders. Pupils can talk about how these values relate to the Bible and impact on their lives and the lives of others. One pupil commented in a religious education (RE) lesson about friendship, 'If you are a good friend, you should say sorry yourself and also forgive, because Jesus forgave those people who killed him'. However, the rest of the school's core Christian values are not explained and communicated fully to pupils, parents and governors nor are they found in school documentation. As a result, they cannot be articulated by all and are therefore not fully embedded in the life and work of the school. The school gives strong commitment to the development and potential of the whole child, as expressed in the mission statement, which is rooted in the belief that Jesus Christ will guide and become a firm foundation in the life of each child. The school has a positive 'I can do' philosophy and, as a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are happy, encouraged and supported academically. In addition, their self-esteem is enhanced by the range of extra-curricular activities offered to them so they can find their special gift. Pupils feel valued and special, are proud of their school and speak confidently about why it is special to them. One pupil remarked, 'This school is special because everyone helps each other. We try and do what's good for everyone else'. Feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive. They state that pupils show great respect for others and describe how their children have learned about tolerance and love for others because of the school's Christian character. Pupils understand that charity work is linked to the needs of others and this has resulted in the school buying a water pump for Water Aid. Pupils' very good SMSC development arises from the school's Christian ethos and the commitment by all to treat each child as an individual. As a result, there is a good understanding of what it means to be part of a church school. Through religious education (RE) lessons, pupils show a developing understanding and respect for diversity and other faith communities. Imaginative teaching in RE contributes well to the pupils' spiritual development. Pupils enjoy RE and say it is important to them and to the life of the school. 'RE gives us examples of how you should act when you get older,' said one pupil. The tracking of pupils' attainment however needs to be strengthened across both key stages.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship reflects the school's distinctive Christian character and is at the heart of school life. Pupils learn a great deal from worship and it helps to develop their understanding of God and the Bible. The 'Open the Book' worship is led by a foundation governor and members of the local church community and is enjoyed by all pupils. This has a good impact in creating a sense of Christian fellowship and is a strength of the school. 'It has brought the Bible to life for me', said one Year Four pupil. Worship inspires pupils to relate Christian values to their own lives and relationships and makes an impact on their understanding of service to others. One pupil, when asked why worship was special, commented, 'In worship we can talk to God, especially if you have a problem. It's good to know!' Planning is effective and secures consideration of a broad range of Christian values, beliefs and festivals. Consequently, children gain an excellent understanding of Christian beliefs about the Trinity. Pupils are used to being silent to reflect and often write and say their own prayers both in school and at home. They make good use of the reflective areas in classrooms and the areas outside. They understand that prayer is a time to speak to God, and know that they can be thankful and it can be a time to say sorry. Evaluation of worship involves most stakeholders and leads to some improvements, but it is often informal and is not always recorded. Worship is well planned and delivered and ensures that there is both variety and continuity and that themes are rooted in Christian beliefs. Although pupils regularly participate in worship, they do not take responsibility for the planning and leadership of whole school worship. The partnership with the church greatly enriches worship. Major festivals are celebrated in the local church, which ensure pupils have worship experiences that are rooted in the teachings and practices of the Anglican church. Parents provide good support for these services and describe them as special events in the life of the school. Worship enables pupils to recognise their responsibilities to others and to reflect on community and personal values. Pupils make good progress in

their spiritual development and display a sense of wonder and awe about God's creation.

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

The headteacher has a vision for the school based on clear Christian principles and values. He sets a good example to the school community and is widely recognised as having a positive impact on the school's ethos. Consideration of how future members of staff are able to contribute to the Christian foundation is integral to the process of all staff appointments. Governors are involved in the life of the school and are supportive of the headteacher and the Christian ethos of the school. However, they have not accessed specific training from the diocese in church school leadership and management and therefore do not fully understand their role. They see this as a key area for development so that they can contribute fully to the school's self-evaluation and inform improvement planning. The RE co-ordinator has a good understanding of her role, and RE planning is good, with clear objectives and progression evident. Pupils have many opportunities to discuss and reflect on religious and ultimate questions in RE lessons and there is some informal monitoring and evaluation of standards. This however needs to be formalised so that RE teaching challenges pupils' higher order thinking skills and so that assessment leads directly to pupils knowing how to improve their learning and further enhances their SMSC development. Parents are enthusiastic about all that the school does for their children. They support its activities, including church services and fundraising. Children value their role in decision-making and are very confident in expressing their views. They speak with pride about raising the funds for various projects including contributing to the local food bank at Harvest festival. The supportive partnership between the school and church is a key feature and is mutually beneficial. The school has good standing in the community and attracts children from neighbouring communities. For example, one parent stated that she travels a considerable distance because of the school's distinctive Christian character and the impact this has on her child's academic and personal growth.

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