



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

### Abberley Voluntary Controlled Parochial Primary School

Apostles Oak,  
Abberley,  
Worcester.  
WR6 6AA

**Diocese:** Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Date of last inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2009

School's unique reference number: 116780

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Wylie

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Ann Stone NS812

#### School context

Abberley VC Parochial Primary School is situated in a rural location. It has 105 pupils on roll who are educated in mixed year classes. The children are all from white British heritage. The school accommodation is limited with hall space only available when classroom furniture is moved. The hazardous route to the parish churches of St Mary's and St Michael's means that children are unable to visit regularly.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Abberley VC Parochial Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The ability of all stakeholders to articulate and promote a vision for the school rooted in Christian values which has an impact on the lives of all members of the school community.
- Children's understanding and articulation of Christian values which have a significant impact on their daily lives and achievements.
- The centrality of children's spiritual development in the life of the school which is embedded in the whole curriculum.

#### Areas to improve

- Provide more opportunities for children to understand that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith enabling all to understand and respect difference and diversity.
- Enhance the space used for collective worship by creating an area where Christianity and other world faiths are recognised and celebrated.
- Introduce formal evaluation and monitoring by governors to ensure ongoing improvement of the school as a distinctive and effective church school.

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

Christian values permeate the whole life of the school and create an ethos that enables children to achieve academic standards and progress above the national expectations. Children are valued as unique individuals with excellent support given to ensure positive outcomes for all. The children readily acknowledge the impact of the school's values within their daily lives and confidently explain the links between the values and Christian teaching. Parents comment that 'Christian values are intrinsically woven through everything the school does.' Purposeful and effective tracking by the religious education (RE) coordinator ensures that planning for the subject highlights areas for spiritual development and provides many experiences which enable children to develop their own personal understanding of spirituality. The opportunity for each member of the school community to, as stated by parents, 'work out their own spiritual journey for themselves' is supported by the work of the dedicated staff. Children explain that they believe the Holy Spirit is with them wherever they are and if they need time to be quiet they can go to special areas within the school and garden. Children ask questions which challenge their own spiritual views. Following a lesson on the creation, a Year 2 child commented 'I don't think God made humans but he did make monkeys who turned into humans. It all seems to make sense when I think about it.' Through the embedded caring nature of the school and ongoing Citizenship project children intrinsically put the needs of others first. The care shown by the older children towards the younger throughout the school day is exemplary. They 'buddy up' to children at lunchtime and playtime and have the ability to recognise when children need extra support. Staff reported that children will confidently speak to them regarding others who may have problems and suggest ways in which they can offer support. Behaviour in the school is very good and children give examples of Bible stories which illustrate the importance of Christian values. The RE coordinator ensures standards are high and lessons challenging and effective assessment procedures are in place which follow diocesan guidelines. Despite the school being a distance away from the village, relationships with the community are excellent. Expressed by parents and governors is the community desire to 'come into school as school cannot come to us'. The foundation governor is a member of the village green committee ensuring that the school's voice and views are heard. The 'Charity Group' discusses and decides upon which local and global charities are to be supported. As a result, children are beginning to articulate which Christian values are at the heart of their fundraising. They have some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith and, through their learning in RE, an emerging understanding of the diversity and difference of other faith communities. The development point from the previous inspection, of addressing social diversity has been addressed through the implementation of the 'Global Learning Programme.' Children are confident to discuss global issues and some links are made between this and Christian values.

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

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and its impact on individuals is readily and clearly articulated by all. Children speak with confidence about the way in which worship shapes their thinking and actions. The RE and collective worship group (CREW), which meets during the weekly Citizenship session, have the opportunity to discuss themes for school worship, plan school assemblies and family services and play a part in the monitoring and evaluation of acts of worship. A range of worship leaders, including staff, parents, governors and teaching assistants offer children a rich and diverse experience of worship. Children clearly enjoy collective worship and confidently lead through music making, singing, storytelling, sharing their own experiences and leading prayers. The lack of hall space limits the use of symbolic artefacts but displayed upon a windowsill are a cross, bible and three candles and children are able to articulate what they symbolise. 'Open the Book' assemblies, led by visitors, are well received and children enjoy participating. The very popular 'Fish Club' is run weekly by the foundation governor which links to the children's Christian club (PAWS) run in the parish church. Children speak about how the activities from each club create an important

link between home and school. Children understand the purpose of prayer and regularly contribute relevant and appropriate prayers to school worship. As a result of 'Fish Club' introducing actions when saying 'The Grace,' all children and staff have now taken this on board. Despite the lack of space there are areas within the school for children to reflect and offer personal prayers. As a result, children view prayer as an intrinsic aspect of life. For example, the foundation governor reported that, when asking two young children what they were doing wandering around, they stated 'We are talking to God.' Children are developing their awareness of the Trinity by the regular mention in acts of worship of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Collective worship regularly includes biblical material and children can confidently relate this to Christian values. Children are able to link biblical characters to specific Christian values which have an impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners. Monthly family services and major Christian festivals are held in the adjacent village hall due to the difficulty in accessing the parish church. Parents state how popular and well attended they are. The Christmas carol service is held in the parish church and is well supported by parents and the community. Monitoring and evaluation evidence is gathered by various stakeholders and provides an insight into how worship influences the life of the school community and leads directly to continuous improvement. Governors regularly attend acts of worship to evaluate the impact of worship and the efficient and effective worship coordinator also ensures that they are kept well informed through regular reports.

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

Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and with a highly supportive team of staff and governors, there is a clear Christian ethos within the school which is subject to continuous review and development. The excellent understanding of all adults of how Christian values and spiritual development make a difference ensures that these are at the heart of the school's vision. 'Visioning Days,' attended by staff and governors, lead to effective strategies for improvement and help to maintain a strong focus on meeting the needs of all learners. Governors know their school and articulate well the understanding of their role as strategic leaders of a church school. Informal monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and religious education by governors is ongoing through observation and discussions. Parents comment that the Christian values shared by the headteacher and staff contribute well to pupil behaviour management and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents know their views are welcomed and valued and state that they feel privileged to be part of the school. The development of all staff and governors as leaders in this church school is achieved through individual support, attendance at diocesan and cluster school trainings and mentoring and support of each other. The church community and wider community contribute to school life with the result that there is mutual and substantial benefit to both. The ongoing Abberley archeological project links with the spiritual, social and cultural development of the children. The very committed foundation governor has ensured that the absence of an incumbent for over four years has had no negative impact upon the school community. She has a very effective pastoral role within the school which is valued by staff, governors, children and their families. She regularly supports the headteacher, RE and collective worship coordinator, leads an after school club, delivers weekly acts of collective worship and promotes the Christian vision of the school to the wider community. The supportive relationships between all members of the school community are clearly rooted in Christian values, providing an excellent example of a school which is both distinctive and highly effective.