



St Giles CE Primary School

Diocese of Chichester

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report



Date of inspection:	13 March 2013
Name of inspector:	Shane Morton
NS inspector's number:	563
School address:	Church Lane Horsted Keynes Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 7AY
Unique reference number:	126057
Status:	Voluntary Aided
Number on roll:	127
Age range of pupils:	5-11
LA:	West Sussex
Name of chair of governors:	Marion Lott
Name of headteacher:	Joanna Francis
Date of previous inspection:	05 June 2008

Description of the school

St Giles is a small village school, established over 300 years ago, serving the parish of Horsted Keynes and located next to the parish church. Some of its pupils come from surrounding villages or from as far as Haywards Heath and North Chailey. The proportion of children with special educational needs is well below the national average and nearly all children are of white British heritage. The school is a Healthy School and has also achieved the Sports Mark Award, the Eco School Award and the Dyslexia Friendly Award.

Summary judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Giles CE Primary School, Horsted Keynes, as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The school is an outstanding church school because the Christian faith strongly underpins the school's aims, values and vision. Children are nurtured and flourish as individuals within a loving school community. Religious Education is very good and the impact of Collective Worship is excellent. Leadership of the school is outstanding and there is a very strong partnership between the school, the parish church and the local community.

Grade: 1

Established strengths

- The distinctive Christian character of the school and its positive impact on the children
- The outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children
- The high standards of behaviour among the children and the excellent relationships among all members of the school community
- The very close links with the Church and the high standards of Collective Worship

Focus for development

- To link the assessment of Religious Education to national levels of attainment and progress
- To develop outstanding practice of prayer in all classrooms

The school meets the statutory requirement for Collective Worship	Yes
The school meets the statutory requirement for Religious Education	Yes

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all its learners?

The school's Christian character is visually explicit and tangible in all areas of the school, e.g. the Inspirational Icons. The Christian values of "Nurturing, Inspiring, Valuing and Respecting" have a significant impact on the children's personal development. The children's behaviour and care for others is exemplary. They are very proud of their school, have a strong sense of belonging and show high levels of self-esteem, e.g. the Achievement Tree. Pastoral care is outstanding and children feel valued and special. Warm, trusting relationships and the Buddy System underpin their love of learning. In a parent survey, one parent wrote, "My child is given every chance to achieve his potential and he will have happy memories for the rest of his life." Children have very good opportunities for leadership such as the school council, peer mediators, team captains, the Boy Bishop and Santa Lucia.

The school's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) provision is excellent. Outdoor learning and the awe and wonder of creation are encouraged, for example through Forest School, and children enjoyed making snowmen on the school field during the inspection visit. RE has an important place in the school curriculum and helps the children to reflect upon and apply Christian values. There is a wide range of visits, visitors, extra-curricular opportunities and community events, e.g. Community Week, and there are well-established links with other schools both in the UK and abroad. One parent enthused, "This is the small school with big opportunities." Charitable giving is very much part of school life and children leave this school as caring Christian citizens of the future.

Grade: 1

What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and is very well planned, led and monitored. As a result, it has a significant impact on children's behaviour and attitudes. Several parents observed that their children come home with profound thoughts and questions. Collective Worship is recognisably and consistently Christian, it follows the Church year and it honours the Anglican tradition. All members of the teaching staff lead worship with excellent support from both the parish priest and other members of the church. One parent commented that, "The school and the church seem to be part of each other and Friday services are very special." In the act of worship observed, supported by many parents, there were good opportunities for singing, learning, celebration and reflection. Prayer is also an important feature of school life, although there is capacity for further development of this within the classrooms.

There are excellent links with the parish church and the children visit it regularly both for worship and as part of the RE curriculum. There are School Eucharists every term and on Education Sunday the service takes place in both the school and the church. One child wrote, "It feels good to be a worshipping school." Father John, the parish priest, sensitively helps the children to develop confidence in their Christian faith. Collective Worship has been very effective at difficult times in helping the school community to deal with bereavement. The school encourages the children to understand more about the wider Christian community and the oldest children take part in the Diocesan Leavers' Service at Worth Abbey.

Grade: 1

How effective is Religious Education?

The effectiveness of Religious Education (RE) is good and there are many aspects which are moving towards outstanding. RE has a high status within the school, commanding equal status with the other areas of the curriculum, and this is effectively demonstrated through good planning, attractive displays and a good standard of learning found in the children's RE books. Teaching is consistently at least good and some of it is outstanding. Parents praised the teachers for being very approachable and for giving accurate and helpful feedback. The headteacher praised the whole staff for, "working really well as a team to offer the children a high quality of learning in the context of being a Church school." Children demonstrate a positive attitude to RE and are attentive and respectful during lessons. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding, e.g. the older children were able to compare the moral aspects of the ten commandments with the pillars of Islam and the noble truths of Buddhism.

RE contributes well to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, e.g. discussion is an integral part of lessons. The younger children are encouraged to link their learning to the themes explored in Collective Worship. Sometimes RE is part of cross-curricular learning and it is often creative, practical and engaging for children. The broad and balanced RE curriculum complies fully with the requirements of the Diocesan guidance and includes a good coverage of different faiths. Buddhism has been introduced to the curriculum as a result of feedback from children. The RE programme includes a visit to the Brighton Synagogue and a visit to Chichester Cathedral. Assessment takes place at the end of each RE unit using the "I Can Do ..." statements. Greater use of national levels of attainment would help teachers and school leaders to challenge the more able children and enable them to achieve even higher standards of attainment.

Grade: 2

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a Church school?

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is very well supported by the staff and governors, who are well informed and play an active role in school improvement, e.g. through the Ethos and Worship Committee. All of the recommendations from the previous inspection have been fully implemented and Christian distinctiveness has been given a high priority in school development plans and staff training. Recruitment and induction procedures are effective in explaining the school's Christian character and the newest member of staff commented, "I have been made to feel a valued part of the school and I have got to know all of the children and their families amazingly quickly." Leaders have developed a vibrant and rich learning environment with delightful play and environmental areas outside.

The partnership between the school, the church and the local community is excellent. The school leaders are very approachable and act effectively upon feedback from both parents and children. One parent described it as, "everyone at the school goes the extra mile." As a result, parents provide very positive feedback about the school and give active, regular and informed support in the classrooms and through the Friends of St Giles. The leadership team, staff, pupils, parents and governors are very positive about how the Christian identity of the school has developed in the last few years and all feel very proud of their Church school. Staff morale and teamwork are outstanding and there is excellent capacity to carry the school forward in the years ahead.

Grade: 1