



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Norton Juxta Kempsey Voluntary Controlled Church of England First School

Wadborough Road, Littleworth, Worcester, WR5 2QJ

Previous inspection grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Worcester

Local authority: Worcestershire

Date of inspection: 28 January 2016

Date of last inspection: 16 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 116834

Headteachers: Julia Dean and Margaret Smith

Inspector's name and number: Duncan Jones 813

The school requested that religious education be inspected as part of the SIAMS inspection.

School context

Norton Juxta Kempsey VC First School is situated in the small village of Littleworth just outside Worcester and caters for children from Reception to Year 4. It has 138 children on roll. In Key Stages One and Two, children are educated in mixed age class groups. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. The number of children eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the percentage of children with support for special educational needs or with a statement or Education, Health and Care Plan. The headship is currently a job share.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Norton Juxta Kempsey VC First School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The inclusive Christian vision of the school ensures that all children are supported in their personal well-being and in their academic achievement.
- Highly effective teaching of the school's Christian values through worship and religious education (RE) enables children to think deeply about their behaviour and actions.
- Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness ensure that leaders know the school's strengths well and are able to act quickly to improve areas in need of development.
- Strong leadership ensures that future leaders of church schools are being developed at all levels.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all members of the school community share the school's well-developed interpretation of spirituality, so that staff can plan for a range of spiritual experiences for all learners.
- Develop a programme of visits to places of worship from a variety of faiths to embed further children's understanding of and respect for diversity.

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

The headteachers' vision for Norton Juxta Kempsey VC First School is that the school should be the inclusive hub of the community and a place where "Christian values lie at the heart of everything we do and the choices we make". These values have a profound influence on the children, ensuring their caring, considerate behaviour towards one another, founded on the core values of forgiveness and trust. Parents describe how their children learn to make choices based on an understanding of right and wrong learnt in school and how they frequently refer to the school's Christian values in situations in the home or community. One four-year-old proudly told her mother how she had shown compassion at school that day and described what it meant to her. The constant reference to Christian values in collective worship and throughout the curriculum, combined with the imaginative links with Kikundi School in Tanzania, challenge any prejudice and ensure that children have a remarkable understanding of and respect for others who may be different in any way or have differing beliefs. Every member of the school is seen as having individual talents and the school strives to ensure that all achieve their potential. In this way, the school's Christian vision also underpins the good academic standards and high levels of attendance achieved at Norton Juxta Kempsey. The school has made excellent progress in developing this framework of Christian values following recommendations in the previous SIAS report. The school's inclusivity extends to parents, who find the school welcoming and easy to approach and who particularly appreciate the availability of the headteachers and the staff. In all these ways, the Christian character of the school has an outstanding impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. The school also has a well-developed understanding of spirituality and actively records examples witnessed day by day. However, this definition has not been fully shared with parents and governors.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Great value is placed on collective worship, which occupies an important place in the life of the school, inspiring both children and staff. The variety of leaders of worship and the range of styles employed engage and interest the children. This means that it is a popular part of each day and one which meets the school's vision for collective worship as a time when the whole community comes together to reflect and to celebrate. At Norton Juxta Kempsey, collective worship is effectively planned around the school's Christian values and the themes explored are later followed up in the classroom and in other areas of school life. The result is that children are inspired and challenged to reflect on their actions. The school's support for various charities also results from messages the children hear during collective worship, such as collecting for the local foodbank. There is strong biblical teaching which means that children can recount Bible stories they have heard and discuss how these relate to the school values and to their everyday lives. For example, children describe how the parable of the Prodigal Son demonstrates the values of hope and forgiveness. Teaching about the Trinity and displays in each classroom and the hall mean that children have a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The school's strong links with local churches and imaginative teaching in religious education ensure that children have a clear understanding of local Anglican practice and the seasons and festivals of the Christian year. Children greatly value the time during worship when there is stillness and time to reflect, and good use is made of the spiritual garden adjacent to the playground. The prayer tree, positioned in a central, accessible area is popular with children and also some adults. This area is looked after by children and the prayers hung on the tree are respected and read out by the children during collective worship. Visiting leaders of collective worship talk about the children's openness to prayer. The result of all this is that children understand the value of prayer in their lives and seek out opportunities to pray. One child commented that prayer makes her "feel warm because I know God is always with me". The school has made excellent progress with the action point from the last inspection to develop opportunities for children to lead acts of worship. The Worship Group now plans, and leads worship regularly and frequently, often incorporating the

school's values into their presentations. They monitor the impact of worship and have devised a scheme of values cards which they give out to children who are demonstrating the school's Christian values. Monitoring of collective worship is thorough and wide-ranging. Children are regularly asked what they enjoy and how worship might be improved, and staff act on their suggestions, such as including a wider variety of songs and more visiting speakers. This ensures that children are fully engaged and so increases the impact of collective worship on their lives.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education has a very high profile at Norton Juxta Kempsey. Teaching is always at least good and often outstanding with teachers adopting highly creative and imaginative approaches to their lessons, such as using role play to consider issues of discrimination. Children particularly enjoy open-ended activities, for example prioritising a set of values, which challenge them to engage in skills such as enquiry, analysis and reflection. They relish a subject in which there is frequently no right answer, but where everyone's response is valued. Teachers' good subject knowledge, the quality and depth of their questioning and the excellent relationships between adults and children mean that children are engaged by and enthusiastic about RE. Good links are made with the school's values – often by the children themselves – and they draw lessons from RE about how to live their lives. In particular, they highlight how important it is to learn about different faiths in order for people to live peacefully with one another. Although teaching about other faiths is good, the school does not have a programme of visiting places of worship from the range of faiths which they study. Children have a good knowledge of Christianity which is reinforced through biblical teaching in collective worship. The knowledgeable, committed and enthusiastic subject leader has established very effective systems for assessment of RE and carries out rigorous monitoring and evaluation. She knows the strengths of her subject well, and consequently she is able to draw up well-targeted action plans which lead to further improvement. The RE governor is closely involved and offers the co-ordinator effective challenge and support. The result of the high quality teaching and leadership is that children make good progress in RE and are achieving standards which are at least in line with national expectations.

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

Senior leaders confidently live out their Christian vision for the school so that it is clearly communicated to all members of the school community. Leaders know their school well and staff and governors carry out effective monitoring of the impact of Christian values on the children. Governors monitor the teaching of values within lessons right across the curriculum, helping to confirm that the Christian vision is truly embedded in all areas of school life. This further demonstrates the excellent progress made by the school since the last inspection. Careful analysis of the school's performance and the needs of individual children provides leaders with the information required to pursue their vision of valuing and nurturing each child. The relationship between school, home and church is a particular strength of Norton Juxta Kempsey. Parents describe the school as "safe and welcoming" and say that the staff look after children "like their own children". Clergy and visitors from local churches describe the school as having a "deeply spiritual atmosphere". Staff hold similar views, describing the school as having a "loving, caring atmosphere". All this confirms the effectiveness of the headteachers' vision that the school should be an inclusive hub of the community rooted in Christian values. Collective worship and RE are particularly well led and managed. This is part of the school's strategy of encouraging and supporting future leaders of church schools, a strategy which includes both staff and governors. The consequence is that not only is Norton Juxta Kempsey extremely well led at present, but it also has the capacity to continue to evolve and grow in the future as an outstanding church school at the heart of its community.

SIAMS report January 2016 Norton Juxta Kempsey VC CE First School, Worcester WR5 2QJ