



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



 The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Gorsley Goffs Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ross-on-Wye

Hereford

HR9 7SE

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Hereford

Local authority: Herefordshire

Date of inspection: 2 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 24 March 2009

School's unique reference number: 116814

Headteacher: Diana Atkinson

Inspector's name and number: Alison Tugwell 810

School context

Gorsley Goffs Primary School is a smaller than average single form entry school with 201 pupils on roll. It is an endowed school and is one of a number founded by Edward Goff in the nineteenth century. It has voluntary controlled status and works closely with nearby Baptist and Anglican churches. The pupils come from the village and surrounding areas and almost all are of white British heritage. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average as is the number of pupils eligible to receive pupil premium.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Gorsley Goffs Primary School as a school with Christian foundations are good

- The caring, welcoming and nurturing ethos which leads to a highly inclusive environment that is focused on the well-being of all.
- The status given to spiritual development within the whole curriculum and the learning environment which promotes the value of reflection and shows its relevance to everyday life.
- The links with a range of churches from different Christian traditions which enhances pupils understanding of Christianity as a multi-denominational faith.
- The impact of school values, especially those of acceptance and friendship, which lead to a high level of respect for diversity and difference towards all faith communities at both a local and national level.

Areas to improve

- Articulate a distinctively Christian vision for the school that is based on core Christian values so that the Christian foundations on which the school was founded are central to the school's aims.
- Embed the recently introduced assessment, tracking and monitoring of achievement in Religious Education (RE) so that these systems lead to improved pupil outcomes, especially for the more able.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to become worship leaders so that those who want to further contribute to worship are enabled to do so.

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

An explicit programme of core moral and social values is inextricably linked with all aspects of school life. As a result behaviour is of a high standard, relationships are excellent, exclusions are below national average and attendance above. By nominating peers to receive 'value awards' pupils show that they recognise the values and can make links with how they might be demonstrated in school. A Year 4 pupil explained how the value of perseverance had made him 'look at things from a different angle and not give up.' However, the core values which underpin the life of the school have only recently been rooted in scripture. As a result pupils cannot yet readily articulate their distinctive Christian nature despite them contributing to the school's tangible Christian character. Governors state: 'The caring nature, linked to Christian foundations, is seen in actions and practical help in times of need.' The acceptance and nurturing of pupils with additional needs as well as the positive engagement with hard to reach families is Christian love in action. This clearly contributes to the academic achievement, personal development and wellbeing of all pupils regardless of ability or background. The school has a clear understanding of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development through its recently introduced policy. SMSC is given centrality within the curriculum with all classes identifying opportunities for direct teaching. However, this is not yet sufficiently embedded to show significant impact on pupils' spiritual development. The importance of RE is recognised at all levels and status is given to it within the timetable, staff training programme and school improvement planning. As a result the subject makes a positive contribution to the development of the school's core values and its Christian character. Links with French, Nicaraguan and Ugandan schools are developing a broader worldview of Christianity. Therefore, pupils have some understanding of and respect for Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Gorsley Goffs is a worshipping community and collective worship is a central way in which the school affirms its Christian foundations and honours Christian festivals. Pupils confirm the worth of collective worship with every child recognising it as 'important' in a recent survey. Collective worship impacts positively on pupils' attitudes with one pupil describing it as a time to 'learn about God, how He wants us to behave and how He wants us to live our life.' As a result pupils are increasingly able to make some links between the Biblical teaching, the school's core values and their own lives. As a non-denominational school, collective worship is enhanced significantly by the wide range of visitors from various Christian denominations all of whom are universally popular with pupils. Consequently pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences which increases their understanding of different Christian traditions. Pupils have a developing understanding of the Trinity which comes from both collective worship and explicit teaching in RE. Monitoring of collective worship by foundation governors is established and has led to improvements such as the introduction of the 'prayer tree.' Pupil evaluations have only recently been introduced. As a result these are yet to lead to improvement planning. Pupils benefit from a rich prayer life at school although formal opportunities are presently limited to times of collective worship. However, pupils see the value of prayer with parents describing how children have asked them to pray for the school at specific times of need. Opportunities for reflection are evident in the curriculum, the outdoor environment and collective worship. This is a significant strength of the school and is having a positive impact on pupils' spiritual growth. In response to school council feedback, pupils are now more involved in aspects of collective worship. All classes lead acts of worship and pupils have ownership of celebrations at the church. However few pupils have regular opportunities to be actively involved as worship leaders at a whole school level.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Pupils enjoy RE, recognise its value and can see its relevance in their own lives. RE has a prominent profile within the school with multi-faith focus weeks increasing pupils understanding of other faiths and cultures. RE contributes effectively to both the Christian values of the school and to pupils' SMSC development. As a result pupils are enquiring and curious with a well developed sense of right and wrong. The curriculum enables most pupils to develop a secure understanding of the key aspects of Christianity with the six week 'Bible Explorer' programme increasing pupils' biblical knowledge significantly. However, not all pupils are able to talk with confidence when recalling Bible stories. The very recently introduced assessment in RE shows that the majority of pupils attain in line with national expectations. Although in-school tracking systems are at a very early stage pupils make comparable progress to national expectations. These systems are still to be embedded so assessment does not yet provide pupils with a clear understanding of their progress in RE and how to improve. Likewise marking does not yet extend pupils' skills. Therefore pupils are unaware of next-steps in order to progress. The RE curriculum is monitored with strengths and priorities for improvement identified. As a result the provision of learning activities which meet the needs of all learners, especially the more able, is a priority within the subject action plan. Provision meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

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

The original Goff's Charity Trust founded the school in 1832 'for the propagation of the Christian gospel.' The school is proud of its distinct Christian nature and its vision is to serve the community by providing high quality education alongside the promotion of traditional values. The impact of these values on the school as a distinctive and inclusive faith foundation school has been clearly evident during times of need over recent years during which time the school has endured bereavement and serious illnesses. The leaderships' secure understanding of school performance leads to Gorsley Goffs being a self-evaluating improving school with increased attainment over three years. Effective partnerships with parents and the local churches are a strength of the school with one parent describing a 'synergy' between school, church and families. Parents state that the 'familiarity (with the churches) is fantastic' providing pupils with a 'connection and sense of belonging to something bigger.' The work the headteacher has undertaken to enhance the Christian character of the school is recognised by parents who hold the headteacher in high regard for 'allowing faith to be so live.' In a recent survey, however, a small minority of parents were unsure as to whether the school successfully reflected its distinctively Christian foundations. Leadership has therefore identified increasing communication with parents as a priority. The RE and collective worship leader has accessed relevant training. As a result both RE and collective worship reflect the Christian character of the school. However, it is a leadership priority that foundation governors also undertake training in order that they are supported in fulfilling their strategic role of ensuring the Christian distinctiveness of the school leads to increased effectiveness. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and stated that 'we are living our Christian faith by being approachable and active.' This involvement impacts on all areas, including the well being of the whole school community, with governors providing pastoral support at times of need. Areas for development from the SIAS inspection in 2009 have been addressed and the statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship are fully met.