

**Culworth Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

**The Green**

**Culworth**

Banbury

Oxon

OX17 2BB

**Diocese: Peterborough**

Local authority: Northamptonshire

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Date of last inspection: 31 January 2006

School's unique reference number: 122019

Headteacher: Mrs Suzanne Lawrence

Inspector's name and number: Janet McMurdo 529

**School context**

Culworth Primary School takes pupils from the village of Culworth and surrounding three villages. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average whilst the proportion with special educational needs is slightly above the national average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Culworth Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

The special talents of each pupil are extremely well developed in this school where the caring, happy and distinctive Christian atmosphere ensures that all children achieve their potential. Excellent leadership and total commitment by the headteacher and the rest of the school team ensure that the beliefs, teachings and values of the Anglican Church fully permeate all aspects of the school's work.

**Established strengths**

- Pupils behaviour, their relationships and personal development are exemplary because they receive high quality pastoral and spiritual care clearly based on Christian values
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, makes her an excellent role model whose vision and commitment are totally infectious
- The excellent acts of collective worship are fundamental to the Christian character of the school and are enriched by the recent introduction of the values programme

**Focus for development**

- Look for opportunities to extend the cultural experiences of the school community to enhance the teaching of religious education
- Ensure that the monitoring and evaluating of the school's work as a church school are more systematic and rigorous

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

The school's distinctive Christian ethos is witnessed in all aspects of school life, from symbols, texts and impressive displays through to the outstanding relationships between pupils. The welcoming, bright and secure atmosphere encourages them to work cheerfully and effectively together. They say that adults listen to them and that they feel safe, special and valued. Relationships and friendships are impressive owing to the high quality care and support provided by all adults in the school. Christian values, such as love, care, sharing, forgiveness, trust, tolerance, respect and mutual support are at the heart of the school and

reinforced by the recently introduced 'Values programme'. There is strong support from the older children through a mentoring process which ensures that the younger children are supported and guided: all the children know right from wrong. Everyone expects children's behaviour and attitudes to be excellent and they are. Praise is used readily by all adults to affirm children. Pupils views are sought through the elected School Council and these pupils encourage everyone to have a mature concern for the whole school community as well as the world at large. For example, the children are committed to exchanging letters, fund raising and providing clothing for a school in Uganda. All age and ability groups achieve well and the caring, nurturing atmosphere is recognised by Ofsted as underpinning the school's significant success with pupils' attainment. The curriculum is rich and vibrant and is supported by a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs though it could be further enhanced by considering ways to enrich cultural diversity.

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

Worship is clearly a central part of the life of Culworth Primary School and the headteacher places emphasis on ensuring that it is well planned, recently using the focus of the newly introduced Values programme. Foundation Governors are aware of the evaluation of collective worship by the headteacher and are on occasion present themselves, as witnessed on the day of the inspection. Pupils say they look forward to collective worship and find it worthwhile and rewarding, except when the headteacher has to 'tell them off' but they recognise that, on the rare occasion this happens it is usually at a different time of the day so that the special time they have in collective worship can be maintained. One very good act of worship, taken by the vicar, was as usual, at the end of the day. Pupils entered the hall quietly and respectfully as music, lighted candles and the lights which change colour established an atmosphere appropriate for reverence and contemplation. They actively engaged with the questions posed by the vicar about the different crosses we recognise which were brilliantly represented visually and provided a perfectly appropriate introduction to the events of Holy Week and the passion. The children were quiet and reverent during the reflection time and then joined in enthusiastically with the singing of 'Oh wonderful love'. Their thorough engagement made it an uplifting and spiritual occasion and, say pupils, it was quite typical of worship led by the vicar. Pupils like worship because they like singing, hearing bible stories and sharing the service with a range of adults. Older pupils particularly welcome the opportunities for reflection which always provide valuable times for personal thinking. The whole school community, including parents, celebrates key Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest in the church.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Pupils have good knowledge and understanding in religious education (RE). Lessons observed and work scrutinised confirm this. The systems which are in place to ensure high standards are achieved in all subjects are evident in the teaching of RE with the use of drama and video recording to subsequently provide feedback to pupils being used particularly effectively in a key stage 2 lesson. Pupils say that RE gives them respect for other religions and particularly comment on the opportunities to relax and reflect which are built into RE lessons very effectively. Teaching and learning in RE is of a high standard and staff have access to a range of quality resources, this was evidenced in a KS1 lesson where the role and duties of a vicar were being considered. Parents who have experience of other faiths are also used very effectively to enrich the curriculum and share their experiences with the children. There are the beginnings of innovative systems in place to assess pupils' development in RE, which reflects significant progress on this action point from the previous section 48 inspection. A questionnaire has recently been introduced to gather information about what children have learnt from the RE they have experienced and how they will respond differently in situations as a result of their learning. This is also as a result of a focus for development identified in the last section 48 inspection. Pupils are shown to make progress which is in line, if not better than, progress made in other core subjects. These assessment processes need to be embedded into the assessment processes of the school to ensure that teachers are regularly checking the progress of pupils over time in RE. The recently appointed RE co-ordinator demonstrates good subject knowledge and the development plan for RE clearly demonstrates an understanding of the next steps needed to move the subject forward.

The link between religious belief and their daily life is just one example of how RE in the school makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is outstanding.

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

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and she has continued to develop the school since the last inspection in line with the focus identified. 'She has made the community proud of its school again' says one parent. She is a super role model who works closely with members of the school team. The governors all share the headteacher's vision of the school as a church school, and are continually working to make it the best it can be. Its documentation, prospectus and policies all reflect this. The staff are all fully involved in this vision and their total commitment to providing the best possible educational experiences for the children is seen in their high expectations of themselves and each other. They are very effective because they are a reflective and self evaluating team. The school is well managed and all issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully. Governors monitor the schools Christian dimension, for example, by attendance at collective worship and through regular observations and discussions, but admit that these could be more systematic and rigorous. In discussion, parents praise highly the school's very special qualities, such as great dedication of the teaching and non-teaching staff, which enable all children to flourish as individuals and make the most of their talents. As one parent puts it: 'Teachers are very aware if there is the potential for a problem and are quick to sort it out. As a result the children feel very cared for.' A thriving Parents and Teachers association contributes substantially to both fund raising and the Christian family atmosphere which pervades the school. Partnerships with the local church, other schools and the community are very effective. The church is used regularly as a teaching resource, and pupils readily show their Christian witness by taking part in church services. The children experience a strong model of Christianity which prepares them very well for the next stage of their lives.