



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Uley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Woodstock Terrace, Uley, Dursley Gloucestershire, GL11 5SW

**Diocese of Gloucester:**

**LA:** Gloucestershire  
**Date of inspection:** Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2009  
Date of last inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2005  
School's URN: 115657  
Name of Headteacher: Mr Karl Joyce  
Inspector: Mrs Daphne Spitzer, NS 37

#### Context

Uley is a village school with 105 children on roll. It is set in a peaceful, rural community close to the town of Dursley. All of the children are white British and numbers with learning difficulties are lower than the national average. There was a significant change of staff at the start of this academic year. Most of the school is accommodated in a modern building and the temporary Foundation Stage classroom is about to be replaced. The school grounds are very attractive and spacious.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Uley as a Church of England school are good

Christian values shine out of Uley Church School. The inspirational headteacher, together with the staff and governors, have created a special Christian community in which children can thrive and enjoy learning. The priest in charge and foundation governor form a vibrant link between the school, parents and parish and contribute very effectively to the school's success as a church school.

#### Established strengths

- Visionary Christian leadership of the headteacher
- Pivotal role of new foundation governor working together with priest in charge and headteacher to develop the school's Christian character
- Strong Christian ethos that is highly valued by the whole school community

#### Focus for development

- Formalise the various ideas for developing the school's Christian foundation into a specific strand of the whole school strategic plan
- Develop a sustainable link with another contrasting community either near or overseas
- Establish and develop an explicit spiritual dimension to an area of the school grounds

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

A very strong Christian ethos underpins daily life at Uley. Children are happy and secure at school. One child said he felt "at home." Parents value the way older children play games with the younger ones and care for them. Any disagreements are almost always resolved with the assistance of the School Council who act as playground friends. The children's "Rights and Responsibilities" charter, based on that of UNICEF, has been effective in promoting high standards of behaviour, courtesy and respect. The school places a high priority on giving the pupils "a voice." A box is centrally positioned in school for their "concerns and suggestions" and actions taken have been beneficial. Parents find staff very approachable and appreciate the way they too feel totally included in the life of the school. For instance, parents regularly have items added to the school newsletter. Relationships at all levels are excellent. Members of the local church, village, parents and staff interact very warmly. The impact of the diocesan resource "Values for Life" has been hugely positive on the day to day life of the school. Display boards focus on the current term's Christian value and a reflective corner in the corridor reinforces the theme. The value in focus at the time of the inspection was compassion and its meaning was widely known and understood. During the act of collective worship, the message that God is with us, walking alongside us through life's journey was a powerful one. The school's Christian ethos very effectively supports the development of pupils spiritual awareness. Prayer and times for reflection are an integral part of the school day. Grace is sung before lunch daily. Children enjoy the importance the school gives to Religious Education and their understanding of Christianity is good. Children from other faiths and from none, are welcomed and included. Diversity is greatly valued. High quality attractive displays around school explicitly reflect its Christian values. The period of Lent was clearly evident in one classroom display where each child is making a Lent help book during the season. Older children expressed pride in the prayer flags made as part of an RE lesson expressing their hopes and aspirations for the world. The school environment is attractive and well maintained. Although there is a quiet area in the grounds, as yet no particular space is reserved to proclaim the school's Christian character or use it to raise spiritual awareness in an outside classroom.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective Worship is central to the daily life of the school. The headteacher, who is the worship co-ordinator ensures that it reflects the values of the school Christian community. Parents said that it is the area of school life most discussed by the children at the end of the school day. The programme for worship is based on the diocesan resource "Values for Life" which the school has adapted and embedded firmly into its whole school practice. All staff attend and lead worship. The priest in charge and the "Open the Book" group from the local church also lead worship each week. Children's attitudes to worship are very positive. They were able to comment on the personal impact of past themes such as Friendship, Fairness and Truth. Referring to the recent theme of Truth one child said "I decided after that I would always tell the truth." Children give regular feedback on how they feel the quality of the acts of worship could be improved and it is acted on. Greater opportunities for participation and role play are now built into the weekly programme. Monitoring is also carried out by the foundation governor. Her suggestions are welcomed. Time to reflect and pray effectively develop spiritual awareness. A child commented on the beneficial effects of prayer and the opportunity it gives to say a "Thank You" to God. The children's understanding of the Anglican faith and practice is outstanding. A recent act of worship led by the priest in charge as well as the foundation governor focussed on the Last Supper and used role play that enabled children to gain a better understanding of the Eucharist. Liturgical colours are used on the focus table as well as a permanent display in the hall. The season of Lent is widely understood and observed by the school community. A candle is lit and a response given. The Lords Prayer is said regularly. Services to

celebrate the major Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter are always held in St Giles church.

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

The headteacher's leadership of the Christian foundation of this school is outstanding. Together he, the priest in charge, foundation governor and whole governing body very effectively promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school. A new staff team, in a very short time, has been united in the school's shared Christian vision. The development of the school's Christian foundation is always given a high priority by the governors. Aspects are incorporated into the overall school's strategic plan, although not under a separate specific strand. Staff feel valued by the whole school community. They are a committed and caring team. Religious Education has been very well led over recent years by the headteacher. He has now transferred the role to the PPA teacher who is passionate and totally committed to raising standards. In a very short time, she has made an impact by working alongside other class teachers sharing her enthusiasm and expertise. Lessons are taught well using innovative styles which promote reflection. Parents play a valued role within the life of the school. Their views are welcomed and sought. However, focussed evaluation of the school as a distinctive church school has not yet began in a systematic way. Links with the diocese are very good and highly valued by the school. Leavers attend Gloucester Cathedral for a special service each year. Involvement in fund raising for charities nominated by the School Council is very well supported. These projects frequently have a Christian perspective, such as "Seeds for Africa." In spite of developments in recent years to form international links, currently there are none with an urban community or one overseas. The partnership between the parish and school is very strong. Joint summer fetes are held each year by the school and church. The priest in charge is pro active amongst the school community, playing an unofficial "chaplaincy" role. She has initiated a pattern of regular "coffee and chat" mornings for mums and "family" walks. Members of the congregation visit school each week to lead the much loved "Open the Book" sessions for collective worship. Year 6 leavers are given a Bible by the parish. The links between the church and school are also strengthened by the foundation governor who also leads the Junior Church. These close links enable her to gain a unique insight into the effectiveness of the school's Christian character.

SIAS report March 2009 Uley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Uley, Dursley, Gloucestershire GL11 5SW