



**Lewknor Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School**

High Street,  
Lewknor,  
Watlington  
OX49 5TH

Oxford Diocese  
Local authority: Oxfordshire  
Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2012  
Date of last inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2009  
School's unique reference number: 123128  
Headteacher: Mrs. Bernadette Morgan  
Inspector's name and number: Rev'd Jan Fielden (108)

**School context**

Lewknor is a popular small rural school drawing its pupils from the village itself, and from the wider area. The building is extremely small but the school makes use of the neighbouring church for whole school activities. The pupils are predominately of white British heritage and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is in line with the national average.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lewknor C of E School as a Church of England school are good.**

The Christian ethos of this school is almost tangible and is lived out in relationships. Pupils grow into mature and confident members of the community who value the place of faith in their lives. The close links with the local church and community are strengthened through a shared commitment to the school.

**Established strengths**

- The quality of the personal and spiritual development of the pupils.
- The leadership of the head in building a team committed to a Christian learning environment.
- The close links between the school and the church community.

**Focus for development**

- Prepare and enable pupils to plan and lead collective worship on a regular basis.
- Ensure that the school environment contributes to, and extends the spiritual development of pupils.
- Offer pupils the opportunity to experience a richer cultural diversity.

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

Relationships throughout the school are outstanding; all adults model the Christian values that translate into this school creating an atmosphere where pupils achieve their best both academically and socially. Pupils are confident and articulate and they understand what is distinctively Christian about the values they follow in the day to day life of the school. They speak of the way these values "make them think more about how they act and think of others."

This forms the basis of their outstanding behaviour and the way they work well together. A 'buddy' system where older pupils mentor younger ones is in place. The school's approach to RE necessitates pupils working together in discussion and reflection which, by Year 6, produces pupils with a aptitude for mature spiritual reflection and an ability to talk about their beliefs. One pupil, in response to the question, is conscience the same thing as faith? writes "No, I don't think it is, conscience is the little voice inside your head that tries to tell you the best thing to do, faith is believing and trusting God, life and other people to do the best they can for you." Pupils grow in spiritual awareness through this approach to RE teaching which also contributes to the Christian ethos of the school, together with the part the church building plays in school life. Also through this approach to RE, pupils learn to value people of other faiths by finding similarities shared by people of all faiths. However, firsthand experience of other cultures is not at present, positively planned for. There is a feeling of openness to the expression of faith in this school; pupils have gained a faith 'language' which they use without hesitation. The constraints of the school building do mean that space for individual reflection at present is limited, however, the constant use of the church, almost on a daily basis, ameliorates this, and plans for outdoor reflective space are in hand.

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

The value themes, chosen by parents and staff, form the basis of collective worship. These themes link Christianity to the everyday issues experienced by the whole school community. Worship takes place in the church next to the school on three days each week, and is an important part of school life. Pupils regard the church as part of their school and feel very comfortable there, as it provides a safe space in which to respond to the worship offered. The pupils appreciate the fact that they are able to use the church building for their worship and RE displays, realising that most schools are not able to do this. The pupils understand that worship is to express faith, and it plays a significant part in the pupils' spiritual development. Pupils say that their worship is part of the worship of the whole community. Pupils write and share their own prayers, particularly in collective worship, although as yet, they do not have regular opportunities to plan and lead worship. The vicar and the team ministry, family and young people's worker, take collective worship regularly, and this is appreciated by the pupils who speak of their enjoyment of these services. Collective worship is monitored and evaluated by both pupils and governors. Parents, who are able to attend weekly celebration assemblies and at festival times, also have an opportunity to comment.

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

The distinctive vision of the headteacher and the dedication with which it is communicated lie at the heart of the school's successful provision for the pupils' development in all areas. Consequently she has the full support of staff, parents, the church and local communities who are engaged fully with the life of the school. Newsletters, village magazines and church noticeboards all communicate school news and events; the school newsletters clearly state the term's 'Christian value'. The staff and governors monitor annually the vision and aims of the school and the impact the Christian distinctiveness has on the pupils. All staff are invited to attend and contribute to this annual discussion. The school's leadership team skilfully identifies and selects initiatives that meet the needs of the pupils such as adapting the SMART achievement awards to include a 'sacred' SMART award. The Head, who is also the RE and collective worship co-ordinator, is experienced in planning and in sharing good practice with staff. The school council feel that their contributions are valued and parents too have regular opportunities to make suggestions which they know will be considered. Pupils are aware of global issues and regularly raise money for local, national and international charities, having particular concern for, and links through a member of staff, with Chernobyl. The head and governors support and encourage staff, the present head being promoted from within the school. There is an active parent and teacher association.