



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Miserden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Miserden
Stroud
GL6 7JA

Diocese of Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire
Date of inspection: Wednesday 29th January 2014
Date of last inspection: 19th September 2008
School's URN: 115692
Headteacher: Mrs Jacqui Sollars
SIAMS Inspector: Mrs Alison Lock NS 605

School context

Miserden CE VA Primary School is a small rural school of 65 pupils situated close to the parish church on the edge of the village of Miserden. It moved to its present site in 1914 and will celebrate its 100th anniversary later this year. The school has very good accommodation, a large field, a creative play area and uses its space well, to the advantage of the children. Recent local gifts have also enabled the school to further develop its productive garden.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Miserden as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The identified core Christian values underpin all aspects of this school leading to a community where everyone is celebrated for their uniqueness.
- The committed enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher in developing an environment where all stakeholders feel valued and enabled to grow both spiritually and socially.
- The strength of the partnership between the governing body and the staff in leading the school.
- The impact of the teamwork between the staff and the staff and children in leading a community that works together for the good of all.

Areas to improve

- Develop the skills of the governing body so that they systematically encourage, monitor and evaluate the impact of the Christian distinctiveness of the school, including collective worship.
- Using the established teamwork within the community, develop a quiet area in the outside environment that can be used by the children for quiet reflection which will support their spiritual development.

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

All members of Miserden School community recognise that the school's values are distinctively Christian and are explicitly embedded into the life of the school. As a result, they acknowledge the significant difference these values make to their daily lives and the achievement of learners, both adult and child. A vision and set of core values have been identified by all stakeholders and these can be seen throughout the environment as display and actions. Attendance and the academic progress made by pupils is good and is attributed to the fact that the children are so happy coming to school because they are valued and celebrated as unique beings in the eyes of God. Behaviour amongst the pupils is very good and it is recognised that the strong relationships rooted in Christian values contribute to this. It is also modelled by the staff and governors whose strength of working relationships is commented upon by other members of the community. Children have a good understanding of Christianity as a world faith, as demonstrated in their religious education (RE) lessons, but also through their involvement with a school in Kenya. RE also plays a very strong role in the spiritual development of the children as it is integrated into the creative curriculum and children are given a wide range of opportunities to express themselves. Teachers identify opportunities for spiritual development within their teaching and share individual progress with the rest of the staff team. All classes have an area of reflection that focuses on the current Christian value and children are given frequent opportunities to express their own thoughts as well as take part in organised times of prayer and reflection. One child said that Hope and Thankfulness were her two favourite values because she knows through trying, she always hopes to do better and she is very thankful for all the support she receives in her learning. The school is considering how the impact of these indoor reflection areas can be transferred to the outdoor environment as they develop an external place of quiet. The church is used frequently and easily as part of the planned curriculum and also to celebrate festivals within the Christian year. The children identify it as an important part of their lives and say that it is often part of the milestones on their journey of life. The vicar is a welcome part of the school, both as a governor and as the local incumbent. She has seven parishes but prioritises the school highly and her input is much valued through pastoral visits, the taught curriculum and as an active participant of the leadership of the school. She recognises the importance of the partnership between the school and the church and believes that the school is growing the church.

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

Members of the school community place importance on collective worship as a daily time for reflection and worship. Children are involved in its planning and delivery on a regular basis and they feel that these are the occasions when it has most impact. Staff lead weekly class acts of worship supported by the children which give the opportunity to differentiate more clearly the specified learning. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for worship demonstrating its high priority in the life of the school. Planning has been adapted as a result of pupil evaluations and class worship was introduced following challenge by a governor. The structure of each act of worship is clear with a welcome, worship, prayer and a sending out. The children take the idea of service to others through the sending out very seriously. This is evident through the way they mentor each other on a daily basis and the initiatives for giving support to others throughout the community and in the wider world. A worship table is used as a focal point for pupils to think about a particular message and the prayer tree is covered with pupils' prayers that are used as a regular aspect of worship. The children have a developing knowledge and understanding of the Trinity as a result of the varied programme for worship which includes involvement from staff, pupils, parents and members of the local church. Prayer is an important part of the daily life of the school through set prayers, such as the school prayer, child written prayers and also requests for prayer through the prayer tree. Children have a good understanding of prayer knowing that it is a two way communication with God but that prayers are not always answered in the ways you would wish. They know that prayers can be said anywhere and at any time and not just in church. Children also write prayers to be used

in the local church services and the church includes the school in their intercessions. The values of the school are celebrated as part of the weekly celebration assembly and at the end of the year a cup is awarded to a child who has consistently shown effort in all of the values. Parents report how important this is both to the pupils and their families. Governors are frequently in the school and play active roles in participating in school life but they need to focus more on the reason for their visit and use it as part of the evaluation process within the school to further its Christian distinctiveness.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education at Miserden Primary School is taught as one of the core subjects in the school. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for RE but integrates it as part of the creative curriculum of the school, making the learning relevant and linked to other subjects in a way that has meaning for the learners. The planning is kept discrete and so coverage of the syllabus is clearly demonstrated. Planning is a team task and all members of the teaching staff meet to plan together each term's work so that they can use each other's skills and ideas to the benefit of the children. It also ensures a good use of resources. The head teacher is the subject leader and she monitors standards of teaching and learning across the school in a very efficient way reporting regularly to the governors so that the leadership of the school has a good level of awareness of standards in the subject. Work is carefully levelled against clear learning objectives and standards are in line, and sometimes above, other core subjects. These records are used to inform teaching and learning for the next term. Two RE lessons were observed as part of the inspection and these support the school's judgement that teaching is mainly good. Children enjoy RE especially when the subject includes a variety of strategies which encourage discussion and deeper thought. Learning walls are used to good effect as part of learning in RE as are visits to the parish church. The subject leader regularly attends Diocesan training and meetings so that her expertise is kept up to date and relevant to the school.

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

The commitment of the headteacher, together with the governing body, means that the vision and core values of Miserden School are clearly articulated and manifested in practice throughout the school, resulting in outstanding leadership. The vision, "Striving, Learning, Excelling Guided by Faith" is declared around the school building, on the website and on school documents and stakeholders tell the story of how this is shown in the behaviour of everyone around the school. The parents are very appreciative of the positive impact on their children's education. They always know the current value and say that it is often transferred to behaviour at home. The parents feel very involved with the leadership and management of the school. Their views are valued and used as they communicate in person, through email and through questionnaires. The governors, headteacher and staff are readily available and welcome comment from the parents. The governing body works very closely with the headteacher to monitor standards on a regular basis and they challenge the head regularly as part of the self-evaluation process which promotes high standards. Professional development is a high priority and visits are initiated to other schools to compare good practice. Links with the Diocese are strong. Pupils are encouraged to be Junior Leaders and contribute to the school through the Pupil Parliament. Their input has meant real change as they have evaluated the effectiveness of their church school through Learning Walks as well as leading fundraising initiatives. Collective worship and RE are both led by the head teacher who places a very high priority on the planning and evaluation of these areas resulting in good practice which impacts on the whole community. The school works closely with its local community but also works in partnership with a school in Kenya. This has enriched the learning of both school communities as well as developing Miserden pupils' awareness of children in global communities.