

**Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School**

Pendennis Road,

Downend,  
Bristol,  
BS16 5JJ

**Diocese: Bristol**

Local authority: South Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Date of last inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2006

School's unique reference number: 109165

Headteacher: Mr Alex Wilkinson

Inspector's name and number: Mr Paul Woodhouse 603

**School context**

Christ Church Junior School is situated on the northern edge of Bristol. Most of the 297 children come from a white British heritage. The number of families entitled to free school meals is below the national average, but is rising. The classrooms have been recently enlarged. Spacious grounds provide facilities for recreation and environmental studies.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church Junior School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.**

Christ Church provides a happy, lively and secure learning environment in which children are valued as individuals. They are encouraged to develop respect for each other and for the environment. Although Christian values underpin much of school life, they are not fully articulated and celebrated.

**Established strengths**

- The school has good links with the local church.
- The school promotes positive attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- The school provides an exciting curriculum for the children, with particular emphasis on environmental studies, art and physical education.

**Focus for development**

- Review and define more clearly the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- Establish a system to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of Collective Worship.
- Governors to establish an effective means of monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school.

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

Christian values support the school ethos and are implicit in all aspects of the life of the school, but the school has recognised the need to develop a greater awareness of its Christian character. It aims to review its distinctiveness to demonstrate more clearly how its values make an impact on the children's learning and personal development. The children love their school and speak proudly of it. They are confident that the adults will support them when they need help. Any problems that occur are resolved quickly by the prompt action of the headteacher and his staff. Relationships are good throughout the school community. Teaching enables children to make good progress and is best when children are challenged. This was particularly seen in an RE lesson where the teacher used skilful questioning to encourage children to think deeply about their responses to the story of the crucifixion. Children speak confidently about beliefs and are able to empathise with others. When challenged to consider the nature of God, one child wrote, " God is loving, peaceful and is

always there deep down in your heart". Attitudes to learning are positive and most children achieve well. The school plans to review its RE curriculum in the light of new Local Authority guidance and to develop a systematic approach to assessment. This will enable the impact of RE on the children to be monitored. Children are aware of the main features of the Christian faith, and of some other religions, and can explain why Easter is important to Christians. The children's learning is enriched by visits, such as when learning about places of worship. There is some visual evidence of the school's Christian character in several areas of the school, such as the large wooden cross and beautiful stained glass window in the hall. However there are few opportunities for personal reflection offered to children around the school. The school is justly proud of its achievements in the care of its external environment, including its free-range chickens. It takes its ecological credentials seriously, but has yet to offer a Christian/spiritual motivation for caring for nature.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.**

Worship is planned by the headteacher, with some input from the clergy and Foundation Governors. The school worships in church 4 times per year, which helps to reinforce to children the importance of the major festivals of the Christian calendar. At other times worship focuses on themes and stories chosen from a range of published resources. At its best, worship is highly effective, such as the Easter church service led by the curate during the inspection. Children were actively involved, through a dramatic enactment of the Palm Sunday story, through reading their own prayers, through lively singing and volunteering response to questions. Times of stillness and opportunities for reflection are provided and used by the children respectfully. Child participation could be developed further by extending the writing and reading of prayers to be a regular feature of school life. A pattern of class-led assemblies is popular with parents. These involve children directly in the planning and leadership of worship. A church assembly team and the parish children's worker visit the school to lead worship. The Chairman of Governors interviewed a focus group of children to discuss the effectiveness of worship last year and the curate asks parents for their responses in an informal way. However there is no regular or formalised means of evaluating the quality of worship and its impact on the children. The children have positive attitudes towards worship and several parents say that their children have become involved in the local church since joining the school. Children of other faiths are happy, respected and included. The school is planning to develop its teaching about other faiths through its Community Cohesion plan. The Christian distinctiveness of the school as a worshipping community would benefit from a more consistent approach to worship throughout each week.

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

The headteacher gives clear and strong leadership to the school based on a strongly held set of values, based on Christian morality. He is well respected for his concern for each individual child and for his insistence on high standards of behaviour and personal achievement. He ensures that there are good systems of communications and information for parents. The headteacher is currently responsible for both RE and Collective Worship. The Foundation Governors provide very strong pastoral support for the school and, together with the clergy, were very supportive during a time of bereavement. They are keen to enhance the Christian character of the school and have created a Foundation Governors' Committee, which is a very positive step. The headteacher and Chairman of Governors have recently attended training by the Bristol Diocesan Education Service. Parents are very supportive of the school, appreciating "The feel of the school" and its good reputation locally, but a few are unclear about how its Christian character enhances its provision. The curate provides a highly effective link between the church and school, through leading worship in church, providing pastoral support to children and staff and through her work on the Governing Body. Good mutual support exists, as prayers are said for the school in church and the school advertises church services and events through its newsletters. The Governing Body appreciates that it needs to review the school's definition of its mission, ethos and Christian distinctiveness and to involve the school community in the process. As yet, there are no established processes to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness as a church school.

