



# Birdham CE Primary School

Diocese of Chichester

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Inspection Report

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Date of inspection:	18 May 2012
Name of inspector:	Hilary Ferries
NS inspector's number:	276
School address:	Crooked Lane Birdham Chichester West Sussex PO20 7HB
Unique reference number:	125972
Status:	Voluntary Controlled
Number on roll:	153
Age range of pupils:	4-11
LA:	West Sussex
Name of chair of governors:	Joyce Henson
Name of headteacher:	Peter Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	March 2008

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The inspection of denominational education and collective worship in the school was carried out in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

## Description of the school

Pupils attend the school from the village of Birdham and neighbouring villages. Almost all the children are of White British heritage and the majority of pupils attend the local parish church. The school has a number of awards including Eco School Green Flag, Investors in Health through emotional intelligence 2009 – 2012 and national winner of EDF 'Most Inspirational School KS2 2009'. The headteacher is retiring at the end of the school year.

## Summary judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Birdham CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Birdham CE Primary School serves its community well. There are good relationships with the parish church and village. The Christian mission, expressed through a commitment to sustainability and care for God's world, is evident in the school grounds and Eco centre. The headteacher is passionate about this area of development. Relationships, underpinned by Christian values, are very strong.

Grade: 2

## Established strengths

- A Christian ethos which permeates the life of the school
- The Christian sustainability and stewardship shown in the innovative curriculum and learning environment
- The strong and developing relationship with the parish church

## Focus for development

- Formalise the systems for monitoring and evaluating the school as a Church school
- Involve pupils more in Collective Worship
- Explore the place of prayer in the school and develop further the relationship with the local church

The school meets the statutory requirement for Collective Worship	Yes
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**The school, through its distinctive Christian character is outstanding at meeting the needs of all its learners.**

The Chair of Governors describes the Christian ethos of Birdham as 'a thread that runs through everything the school does'. The school self evaluation says it values all pupils and pupils interviewed confirmed this. The school is committed to success for all pupils and standards and achievement are good. Pupil progress is carefully tracked and RE progress is tracked in the same way as maths and English, which shows the importance of the subject in the school.

The 'Birdham Charter', based on Christian principles, outlines clearly the code of behaviour and expectations and pupils all sign to agree they will follow it. As a result behaviour is excellent and there is a strong sense of a school family shown in the very positive relationships in the school. One aspect of the charter is the importance of respecting the wonder of God's creation. This is very important to the school community. The school grounds have many examples of sustainability and stewardship, such as the polytunnel where pupils grow and harvest produce, the oxbow lake and the community orchard. The development of the Eco Centre which is visited by other schools also shows the passion of the school for this area. The school environment promotes the spiritual development well. Each classroom has a reflection or RE focus board which reinforces the ethos of the school as a Church school.

Pupils interviewed were very positive about their Church school. They talked about how much they enjoy their work, that their 'teachers help you to understand and always make time for us'. They feel that the school council has a voice in the school and makes a difference. They raise funds for several organisations including the Royal British Legion and St Wilfred's Hospice which helps them understand the importance of caring for all. Although the school is in a rural area, pupils interviewed were aware of the cultural diversity in the UK and the support for the Kotukala Nursery School in West Gambia increases their awareness of the global dimension. A recent visit from the headteacher of the school enabled them to hear about the difference their support is making.

**Grade: 1**

**The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good.**

There is a clear pattern for worship and weekly themes are displayed in the hall and known by the pupils. Pupils interviewed said they enjoy the range of worship: they like the PowerPoints used by clergy. They talked about how stories from the Bible and the group 'Chanticleer' could 'show you how to be when you are older'. They especially like taking part in the more active worship sessions and would like more of these. However at the moment, views from pupils about Collective Worship are rarely sought, which limits opportunities to develop this area further. The whole school says grace before lunch, but classes vary in the way they use prayer and the place of prayer is not consistent across the school. The act of worship observed during the inspection was well attended by parents and there was active staff participation.

There are good links with the Parish Church. There is an interregnum at present, but several local clergy and the church youth worker have made sure that there are still very close links and as a result the pupils have a good knowledge of the Anglican tradition. There have been developments in this area and the church reaches out to the school with a range of activities such as a Christian camp and an early evening service for families and resulting in a strong Christian community.

**Grade: 2**

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

The headteacher has a strong Christian vision for the school expressed through the beauty of creation and the importance of caring for God's world. He expresses this vision through three 'layers' of care for pupils: care for themselves, care for each other and care for the world. This is reflected in the many innovative projects in the school grounds and in the development of the Eco Centre. All pupils are aware of this mission, although not all express this in terms of Christian vision. The school is oversubscribed and parents interviewed were positive about the Christian ethos of the school.

Leadership have addressed the issue from the last inspection and shared the Church school self evaluation toolkit with governors who have given feedback and comments. However the introduction of more systematic processes for the monitoring and evaluation of worship' has yet to be addressed. Governors are committed to the school as a Church school and have ensured that the new headteacher will also be a practising Christian.

The school has very good links with the local church which has worked hard through the interregnum to maintain and to grow the relationship. With the departure of the long serving and very dedicated priest, a wider range of people have become involved with the school and a range of new and developing activities such as youth camp and a service for families at 5pm have increased the number of families who attend church. There is a strong sense of community. The headteacher writes for the monthly Parish News 'School Special', outlining life and times of a Church school giving parishioners an understanding of the world of school. School work is displayed in the church with 'Art in the aisles' which highlighted some of the work done at the school. School services held at the church are always well attended by parents and there are good relationships with parents and the wider community.

**Grade: 2**