

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Cooper and Jordan Church of England (VA) Endowed Primary School

The Green, Aldridge, Walsall,
West Midlands WS9 8NH

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Walsall

Dates of inspection: 17th October 2012; Date of last inspection: 24th April 2007

School's unique reference number: 132073

Headteacher: Robert Trawford

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Marianne Phillips 586

School context

Cooper and Jordan C. E. (A) Primary is a school that is highly valued by its school family and its community. It provides a strong Christian foundation for its pupils, a '*living faith*' that stays with them when they leave. Clear Christian values underpin all aspects of school life, binding its members together in an atmosphere of caring and respect. There are 502 pupils on roll, including the Nursery. Links with its parish church are very strong. The rector was appointed this year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cooper and Jordan C. E. (A) Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

On arrival the school's signage openly declares, '*in our school community we grow in Christian faith through prayer...in God's eyes each one of us is special*'. Key Christian values unify school, church and community, creating a sense of belonging. Families want their children to attend this school as evidenced by a waiting list for places. As one pupil explained '*here I feel loved and have lots of friends*'. The headteacher's charismatic, Christian witness and his passion for the school and its families, creates an ethos that is harmonious and welcoming. A sense of '*a strong team moving on together*' is evident to all, making a difference to everyone who is part of this distinctive, caring school.

Established strengths

- Christianity at the heart of daily life and relationships nurtured by clear Christian values that encourage each individual to feel special as one of God's children and achieve their very best;
- The headteacher's effective leadership and Christian witness, guiding all to learn about Jesus' life and teachings;
- The outstanding links between the church, school and community providing many opportunities to foster pupils' spiritual development;
- The supporting way the school lives out its inclusive Christian message, enabling all children to leave with a sense of self worth and a desire to help and support others.

Focus for development

- To harness the enthusiasm of pupils towards worship by helping them to grow in their role as worship leaders, encouraging them to plan, deliver and evaluate the worship experiences of the school;
- To build upon the strengths that already exist, through the creative and challenging teaching of RE, by reviewing the schemes of work and assessment procedures that link to this;
- To ensure the foundation governors become involved in formally evaluating the impact of worship and the continuing growth of this Church school;

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

Cooper and Jordan school is special in the way it enables all learners to feel valued and loved by God. Pupils are given a Bible in year 3, and all enthusiastically share how, '*this is a special gift...it helps us to learn about Jesus and to find out about what God did*'. The partnership between home and school is very strong. As one parent noted, '*without the Christian approaches used by this school I would home-school my children*'. Parents also believe the headteacher's Christian witness impacts positively upon the children, reflected in the words of one child who told her mother that '*we should not be angry, we should have a think and listen*'.

to our hearts'. The school council, playground ambassadors, buddies and play leaders are some of the important responsibilities held by pupils, who actively support the daily functioning of the school. They emphasise the way the school encourages them to discuss and reflect upon their own spiritual growth and the part Jesus plays in their lives. *'He is God's son and He died for us on the cross.....He shows us how to live with each other'*. Children confirmed that *'we all write prayers and prayer is important, a time to spend with God alone in school and at home'*. The 'prayer wall' display evidenced pupils' spiritual responses to prayer explored on their 'spirituality day'. The school has plans to build upon the successes of the School Council by forming a Spiritual Council to encourage the pupils to reflect and think deeply. There are also plans in place to create another 'quiet area' to provide opportunity for the pupils to reflect and pray at playtimes. These are both very good ideas to help pupils thrive in an atmosphere that builds confidence and trust. Pupils make outstanding progress and this is reflected in their outstanding achievement, by the time they leave their school. The *'Tree of Achievement'* and the efforts made to *'build learning power and thinking muscles'* are a few of the effective strategies employed by the school to enable pupils to 'grow' from *'leaves to apples to butterflies'* progressing successfully through their learning journeys. Pupils stress, *'there is no bullying'*, and this is evidenced by the way children of all ages play and work together. The chair, vice chair, Rector, and school church worker all spoke openly of their faith. Their pride and commitment to the pupils and the school is commendable. They shared how the school is enabling pupils to feel *'its good to be a Christian'* through the *'Cool Box Club'* and *'JAM time'*. All around the school the excellent work and the vibrant curriculum is celebrated through displays and Art, that exemplify the quality of learning experiences offered. In so many ways the school is making a difference to the lives of its children and families.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The act of worship observed was outstanding. A large gathering of parents, pupils and teachers filled the hall to celebrate the distribution of the Bibles to year 3 pupils. The sense of excitement and expectation was tangible, enhanced by the beautiful musical interpretation of the worship song 'Lord I lift Your Name on High' performed by the very talented school ensemble. The Rector and headteacher worked in partnership to make the worship personal, through their witness of the importance of the Bible in their lives, describing it as a source of *'living treasure'*. Discussions with pupils confirm how worship encourages them *'read the Bible and think about God'*. They enjoy worship especially participating in and leading worship. All are keen to invest more fully in future worship and display confidence and a sense of responsibility to do this. Developing their role as 'worship leaders' is a good idea and would encourage them to show how they value worship and learn from it. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards faith and belief. All members of the 'school council' described themselves as Christians and emphasised how they are taught respect for all faiths. Visitors and other Christian leaders were used effectively during the interregnum to maintain the links with the Church and Christians in the community. The Christian youth worker is one of the regular leaders of worship in school. He runs the 'Hothouse', a Christian centre for young people in the community, which many past pupils attend. Visitors and visits are used effectively to expand the pupils' experiences and understanding of different faiths. Parents are very positive about the school's status as a Church school. They stress their appreciation for the way the school *'sets seeds through teaching Christian values'*. Also how its outreach is *'missional'*. They enjoy attending Church to celebrate, with the school, the main festivals of the church calendar. In a range of ways, the school effectively support and promotes the spiritual development of its pupils through worship.

The effectiveness of Religious Education (RE) is outstanding

Standards in Religious Education are very good, comparing favourably with achievement in other aspects of the curriculum. Pupils make outstanding progress in their religious understanding. Inspirational teaching in the lessons observed is challenging pupils to think and reflect at very high levels. Teachers plan effectively together, to provide opportunities for their pupils to *'learn about'* religion. The WOW factor is evident through the challenge to *'learn from'* those experiences. In one lesson the *'Big Question'* to solve called for them to apply their knowledge of Islam to the way the newspapers portray Muslim Leaders in real life. In another class, younger children successfully built parallels between their *'Good to be Green'* behaviour policy and the message from the Parable of the Sower. Discussions, through the use of talk partners, showed how pupils are becoming reflective and knowledgeable. Focused

learning objectives and questioning, targeting their individual opinions and thoughts ensure they are clear about the teacher's expectations and learning outcomes. The school is undertaking a review of their scheme of work and their approaches to assessing RE . They plan to establish a working party to review the effectiveness of existing practice, drawing from a range of resources for guidance. This is good practice. Christianity is the main religion taught. In addition, aspects of Judaism, Islam and Sikhism are explored. The RE Coordinator and all adults observed appreciate the opportunities afforded through exciting, invigorating RE and aspire to excellence. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the spiritual progress made by pupils, as they move through the school, is a main focus for the review. The school's strong links with its local community are embedded. They have also developed a link with a school in Kenya, through their '*International Schools*' work. These links and their extensive fund raising for charities have established a strong sense of community cohesion, both locally and globally, amongst the pupils.

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

The Christian vision of the headteacher is shared by leading governors and staff. They are passionate about the future growth of Cooper and Jordan as a distinctive Church school. It is clear that the school family truly lives out the message of its mission statement. Documentation and signage proclaim this, emphasising the school's Christian foundation. '*Pupil voice*' and the '*Parent Forum*' are effective vehicles for gathering the views of their families, emphasising the fact that this is a school that listens. The governors hold the school to account well. They understand the importance of self evaluation and take their responsibilities very seriously. Although they regularly attend worship, the foundation governors are keen to also formally monitor the quality of worship. This is a very good idea to further promote the school's effectiveness as a Church school. The school has benefited from the support provided by the Diocese. Training is often targeted to ensure school leaders, staff and governors have the skills to support the future Christian growth of the school. This school is highly effective in all it does. The outstanding relationships, which have been fostered between school and community, are celebrated for the contribution they make to all involved.

SIAS report October 2012, Cooper and Jordan C of E (VA) Primary Walsall WS9 8NH.