

**Stoke Row CE (VA) School**

Stoke Row  
Henley  
Oxfordshire  
RG9 5QS



Type of school (Infant, Primary, Middle, Secondary etc)	Primary
Status (VA, VC or Foundation, CTC or Academy)	Voluntary Aided
Diocese	Oxford
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Date of inspection	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2010
Date of last inspection	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2007
School's Unique reference number	123136
Name of Headteacher	Mr Steve McTegart
Name of Chair of Governors	Mr Ryan Bradley
Inspector's name and NS inspector's number	Mr Andy How 587
<b>Context</b>	
Stoke Row Church of England School lies alongside the Parish Church and together they are central to this rural community. Pupils are mainly from white British backgrounds and there are few children having special needs. The school became voluntary aided in April 2007 and is now fully established as such.	
<b>The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stoke Row as a Church of England school are good</b>	
<b>Established strengths</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The enthusiasm of the children for their school and the impact it has on their lives.</li> <li>• The practical commitment of the leadership to the school as a Church school.</li> <li>• The integration of the Church and the school which is greatly beneficial to them both as well as to the whole community.</li> </ul>	
<b>Focus for development</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For school leadership to develop its self-evaluation of the school as a Church school in order to be able to make an accurate assessment of the impact of its rich provision and to plan for improvement.</li> <li>• For clearer communication of the distinctiveness of the school as a Church school to be made through its documentation.</li> <li>• For governors to ensure that systems and structures are in place for the ongoing review and evaluation of collective worship and Religious Education.</li> </ul>	
<b>The school through its distinctive Christian character is good at meeting the needs of all learners</b>	
Children are enthusiastic and enjoy talking about the aspects of their school which spring from its being a Church school. All parents spoken to were also positive about this and many of them linked the high standard of work and behaviour to the fact that it is a Church school. A few were able to articulate clearly specific ways in which worship has a strong influence on the children's approach to their work in the classroom. "Being together for whole school worship teaches children the disciplines of listening, reflecting and respect," said one mother. The school's self-evaluation refers to children being made aware that they are distinctive as 'gifts of God' and this is evidenced in the self-confidence which they show in speaking about their beliefs in front of each other and to adults. Children talk about the manner in which they are helped to resolve playground disputes because they learn to say and be sorry and to forgive. They recognise the relevance of the 'fruit of the spirit', love, joy, peace etc. in developing and maintaining good relationships. They can also articulate how that learning about other religions helps them to have a respect for people who are different. Children have some awareness of global issues and they have been involved with raising money to give to the Haiti earthquake appeal.	
<b>The impact of collective worship on the school community is good</b>	
Worship is warmly appreciated by the whole school community and children show particular enjoyment of special celebrations. Parents spoken to during the inspection recognised school	

worship as the ground from which the school's values grow. "The Bible stories give the moral values a strong foundation" said one. This was supported by the act of worship observed, which took the story of the Prodigal Son to illustrate the meaning of being sorry and of forgiveness. Children participate in prayers which they sometimes make up themselves. This contributes to their spiritual awareness and they are very confident about expressing their beliefs. One child spoke freely of praying for friends in need and another said that he prayed when he was stuck with his work. Another agreed and said that being able to pray helps overcome feelings of anxiety and thereby enables you "to think about what you should be doing more clearly". It is evident that the daily use of the Church for worship led by the Head Teacher, Rector and non-conformist ministers contributes strongly to the community cohesion of the village. A good group of parents attends Friday morning worship on a regular basis. Some parents who described themselves as not being religious said that they chose the school for their children because of its Church status, and one of the foundation governors said that there are families who are grateful to have found their way into the Church through its link with the school. The Church ministry team plan their contribution to worship but planning within the school is not done systematically.

#### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

There are good aspects to the teaching and learning of religious education. The Oxford Agreed Syllabus forms the spine for the curriculum with variations that are effective, though not systematically planned. This means that the focus for development relating to religious education in the last inspection has not been satisfactorily completed. An example of good practice is cross-curricular work such as that seen in a literacy / religious education lesson observed, in which different written accounts of the story of the Good Samaritan were compared. Children were invited to reflect on the key concepts of kindness, goodness and caring and to make links with their own experiences. This type of approach leads to children being able to relate experience to belief. Drama in groups reinforces understanding and application of the lessons, drawing on children's empathy. A variety of approaches, including visits to various places of worship, contributes to the enjoyment which children have of religious education and they learn to relate experience to belief. Children learn about other faiths and some parents speak positively about the awareness of, and respect for, others which this engenders. Children's spiritual and moral awareness and their ability to talk about their own beliefs and the beliefs of others also owe much to the teaching of religious education. However, insufficient assessment or monitoring takes place for the school to be confident about levels of children's attainment or the degree to which they are making progress across key stages.

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

The Head Teacher, Governors, and the Rector are all committed to the effectiveness of the school as a Church school. One of the foundation governors says "it has blossomed as a Church school since taking on Aided status in 2007." This is exemplified in the plan to replace the Church pews with chairs so that the space can be used more flexibly by the school for worship and for music, dance and drama. Parents speak clearly about the practical outworking of the Church status of the school. "It is pitched at a way to live," said one, and they recognise that its moral values are closely linked to its Christian ethos: "It draws the whole community together," said another. A Teaching Assistant says confidently that children's respect and good behaviour is linked with the Christian ethos. Staff speak positively about the good practice which comes out of the school's Church status and they refer to the benefits of the special care and support which are evident. Governors are familiar with the school and its practice because they visit frequently, observe lessons and are present for some of the worship. The school's documentation and systems for formal evaluation are not sufficiently robust to enable governors to ensure that the good practice which is now firmly in place is sustained and built on in the future. This means that the focus for developing a programme for all aspects of Church school status from the last inspection has been not been satisfactorily carried out, although the school can show that its leadership is doing the right things very successfully from day to day.