Bisham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
Church Lane,
Bisham,
Marlow,
SL7 1RW.

**Diocese: Oxford**
- Local authority: Oxfordshire
- Dates of inspection: 11th June 2012
- Date of last inspection: 20th November 2007
- School's unique reference number: 109951
- Head teacher: Mr Jim Cooke
- Inspector's name and number: Margaret Maskell SIAS 136

### School Context
Bisham is a smaller than average sized primary school. The large majority of pupils come from homes beyond the village, mainly from nearby Maidenhead and Marlow. Most pupils are of white British heritage and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by 'school action plus', or with statements of special needs, is broadly average.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bisham CofE Primary School is good
A strong Christian ethos is embedded in the life of the school. Relationships within the school community are exemplary and are characterised by Christian care, respect and concern. There is a tangible family atmosphere that is inclusive and ensures all feel cared for and safe.

### Established strengths
- Christian values have a strong impact on the lives of everyone in the school.
- An effective 'buddy system' is in place to ensure that all pupils, young and old, thrive in their personal development.
- The headteacher leads the school with passion and care.

### Focus for development
- To ensure that all governors and staff take responsibility for reviewing the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- To enable the foundation governors to be trained and to be fully aware of their role within the school.
- To ensure that the school's Christian foundation is communicated on all school literature and notice boards.

### The school through its distinctive Christian character is good at meeting the needs of all its learners.
The school has a clear ethos of inclusion, care and respect, which is underpinned by the Christian foundation of the school. Relationships within the school community are excellent and staff act as role models for the children, who are polite and well behaved. The introduction of the 'R time' has been an effective system of teaching the children social and moral codes. All are aware of the school’s 'diamond rules' and speak about the need to be caring, thoughtful and polite to each other. The provision of 'random pairing' throughout the school ensures that everyone feels included. Pupils recognise that they need to talk to each other in order to resolve their differences. Staff work together as a supportive team.

Parents value and recognise the school's Christian status, along with the values from which the ethos of the school has developed. Parents feel that their views are considered and there are examples of parents turning to the school at times of need. The 'buddy system' is well embedded in the school ethos. Older pupils are given the responsibility of caring for the younger children, giving them an opportunity to develop qualities of care, respect and tolerance. Collective worship impacts on the ethos of the school. Children talk about Christian values which teach them how to lead their lives. The good teaching of RE impacts on the children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures, helping to
encourage principles of tolerance and respect. Their moral and cultural awareness is encouraged and developed through the national and global links which have been developed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good
Collective worship takes place each day both affirming and strengthening the strong Christian values of the school. Pupils and staff talk enthusiastically about collective worship, seeing it as a time to meet together as a Christian family. The 'buddy system' encourages each family group to sit and worship together and is part of the ethos of being a Christian family. Planning is largely based on the school’s Christian values - it also includes major festivals and significant events in the church year. Children are given opportunities to express their own ideas about worship. They appreciate that the 'values of the month' teach them, both to be aware of others, and also to know the standards of behaviour which are expected. They enjoy the opportunities they are given to take part in worship by acting out bible stories. They say that this gives them a greater understanding of the Christian faith. Staff complete an evaluation form for worship and this helps the staff team to assess the impact of worship. Governors do not evaluate collective worship. The beginning of worship is denoted by the reading of the school prayer. Children throughout the school write their own prayers which are used in worship. The children are familiar with the words of The Lord’s Prayer. Members of the school family, who are from other faiths, feel fully included in worship. The vicar led worship on the subject of Pentecost and this was explored later in class, with the older children, who were encouraged to question what they had heard and so to develop their own thinking. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the Anglican faith through visits to the church for special services. They talk of the peaceful atmosphere within the church and of the beautiful stained glass windows.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of this school as a church school is satisfactory
The school’s mission statement clearly sets out the school’s Christian foundation. The headteacher and staff articulate the Christian vision so that it is clear to all those involved in the school community. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the needs of all the children in his care. He recognises that all those involved with school life are part of the school’s Christian family. The school has managed to maintain its links with the nearby church despite there being an interregnum. The recently arrived new vicar, who will be responsible for appointing other clergy to this team ministry, has already fostered an excellent relationship with the headteacher, staff and pupils. Two new foundation governors have recently been appointed. They are committed to supporting the school, but as yet they have not undertaken training and have not been able to carry out formal monitoring of the school’s Christian distinctiveness. With the appointment of a new member of the clergy who will become a foundation governor, the school has rightly identified that it is now in a good position to take a fresh look at Christian distinctiveness. At present there is insufficient indication in signage and letterheads, of the school’s Christian heritage of which it is justly proud. The links with parents are good. Parents feel strongly that their children are nurtured and supported sensitively. The school has satisfactorily addressed the majority of issues from the last inspection. However they still have to introduce procedures for involving foundation governors in the monitoring and evaluating of collective worship. The headteacher and governors have a satisfactory system for appointing and inducting staff, which maintains and develops the Christian ethos of the school.

SIAS report Bisham C of E Primary School, Marlow. June 2012