



## Assessed distance learning course C

### The school's C of E self-evaluation (2008)

*Note: the bullets in this self-evaluation follow the questions in version 2 of the SIAS Toolkit dated September 2006. No grades were included.*

#### **1. How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?**

##### **1A: To what extent do all learners feel valued and special?**

- Our commitment to develop 'the whole child' is expressed in the school's mission statement, which underpins the school's ethos.
- The school's Christian ethos underpins all policies, especially those for personal development, and is expressed through themes of equality and inclusion where everyone is valued.
- The school provides for a wide range of activities both in and out of school. Parents and learners express their needs through questionnaires, parents' meetings and the school council.
- Everyone is valued and respected, and so they feel safe and secure at school. We receive good feedback.
- Strong support for SEN pupils is provided by the SENCO, teaching staff and teaching assistants. There is effective support for the few excluded pupils. Personal development is good (Ofsted 2008). New pupils are welcomed to the school by staff, pupils and parents.

##### **1B: How well do the school's Christian values impact on learners and enable them to flourish as individuals?**

- All pupils have targets and a tracking system is in place. Teachers plan differentiated work for their pupils and there is regular assessment.
- Merits are awarded and presented weekly in Friday's collective worship along with our 'star of the day' awards. The 'high table' is used to promote good behaviour at lunch times. Achievement is celebrated at the Leavers' Service with the presentation of academic prizes and also a special prize for the Year 6 pupil who has consistently demonstrated a caring and considerate attitude.
- Positive feedback from pupils about how much they enjoy school comes from questionnaires and circle time. Pupils' achievements are encouraged and rewarded along with awards for out of school activities eg swimming and gymnastics. Pupils speak of the challenges and enjoyment of outdoor education experiences.

##### **1C: How well does the Christian ethos support the SMSC development of all learners, whether they are Christian, of other faiths or of none?**

- We have good contact with the Parish Church. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted through the Mission Statement and demonstrated through school's ethos. Our mission is to provide:
  - a positive, caring ethos shaped by a Christian perspective

- a caring supportive environment where every individual is valued
  - an atmosphere in which the beliefs of others are respected
  - the opportunity for pupils to develop their full potential
  - an active partnership between parents and school
  - close links with the local community and the parish church.
- The school's mission statement underpins the curriculum. Personal, social and emotional welfare is an important part of the school's work. We use SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) and we link this to worship. We ask all staff and volunteers to bring a Christian perspective to their work and model positive Christian behaviour.
  - Prayer is an important part of the life of the school. The daily act of collective worship and class prayers are embedded in the school's tradition. Children's prayers are collected and used in collective worship.
  - Religious education supports the spiritual development of learners.
  - We place a lot of emphasis on achieving a good understanding of moral values and an appreciation of right and wrong actions. There are opportunities through age appropriate class discussions and circle time (PSHCE), for which we use the SEAL approach.
  - Numerous charity fundraising events are held each year. Following the Harvest Festival each year pupils distribute harvest gifts to senior citizens in the community. A Kenyan school is supported with donations from Key Stage 1 pupils in place of fruit and vegetables. Older pupils provide Christmas entertainment at a local nursing home and day centre. All of these activities are an established part of our school tradition.

**1D: How are Christian values evident in the relationships between staff and learners, amongst learners and between staff?**

- Disagreement and conflict are resolved through the Christian theme of forgiveness and the importance of a new start. Pupils are encouraged to 'shake hands' after disagreements and say 'sorry'.
- Pupils work well collaboratively with partners of all ages and abilities. They offer support to one another. A group of pupils help the school's play leader with games and activities and offer support to those in difficulty.
- Pupils' views are sought through questionnaires and the school council. Children are encouraged to speak to class teachers and headteacher about their problems.
- Leadership and management tasks are shared through devolved leadership and all teachers have responsibilities for subject co-ordination. Subject co-ordinators contribute to the School Improvement Plan. All applicants receive a copy of the mission statement and appointed staff are expected to support the school's Christian ethos as set out in the mission statement.

**1E: How well is the school environment used to encourage spiritual development?**

- A cross is placed prominently in the entrance hall along with the school's mission statement. Candles, a cross and embroidered cloths, made by pupils and representing the liturgical calendar, are used daily in collective worship.
- During the year, RE work is displayed (eg Divali candles and nativity displays in the hall).
- Nothing about the parish church is displayed in school at present but there are links with the diocese and parish church via the school's website.

## **2. What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?**

### **2A: How important is worship in the life of the school and how is it demonstrated?**

- The centrality of collective worship is described in the school's prospectus and reinforced during interviews with new parents and pupils.
- The collective worship is overtly and unapologetically Christian and in keeping with the Anglican Church. We see this as a special time that is highlighted as different from normal classroom work.
- Observations and evaluations of worship are carried out by governors and staff. Evaluations are acted upon (for example, we changed the seating arrangements so that pupils were not so far from the person who leads worship).
- Collective worship follows SEAL themes, with the main themes of the church calendar and events such as World Book Day included.
- The worship co-ordinator plans and leads collective worship effectively along with the Rector from the parish church and, more recently, other members of the team ministry.
- The CW co-ordinator has attended and assisted with diocesan collective worship training. We have increased our worship resources and they are well used.
- All major church events are celebrated in church (eg Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the leavers' service). We see this as a major factor in contributing to pupils' spiritual development.

### **2B: How positive are the attitudes to collective worship?**

- There is good engagement and involvement in worship and children are eager to prepare for and take part in special services. There is an expectation of quiet respectfulness during prayers and pupils recognise that collective worship is a special time.
- Older pupils prepare for collective worship as part of their daily responsibilities. They set out the hall chairs, embroidered cloths, overhead projector and operate the CD player.
- Pupils enjoy worship. They like attending the church for our special services, and especially like the carvings in the choir. They like the peaceful atmosphere we create in worship that contrasts with the pressure in ordinary lessons to complete work on time and meet targets.
- All staff attend worship and actively participate in collective worship on Tuesdays and Thursdays. One teacher attends on the other days on a rota basis to give colleagues additional preparation time. TAs attend with the children they support.

### **2C: To what extent do learners and staff of all faiths derive inspiration, spiritual growth and affirmation from worship?**

- We have not collected information on this. We think it helps our pupils to understand themselves better and to develop a spiritual dimension in their lives.

### **2D: How well does collective worship develop learners' understanding of Anglican faith and practice?**

- A set of collected school prayers is used as a resource and a range of hymns and songs are used to fit the theme of the collective worship. These are also used in the children's services in the parish church on Sundays.
- We try to focus on the main areas of the Gospels that support our SEAL approach.

- The Lord's Prayer is said regularly and is well known but not completely understood by all, especially the younger pupils. We ask teachers to reinforce its meaning from time to time.
- There is no tradition of a school Eucharist.
- Worship is mainly taken by the headteacher and worship co-ordinator. Two members of the local clergy, one the Rector, visit half-termly to take worship.
- Older pupils have attended multicultural events held in our Cathedral in 2006 and 2007, but we do not visit often.
- All the major festivals are celebrated in church.
- All school services in the church are open to parishioners, pupils and their families. Children from the church club have taken part in church services and in school worship and have had their work displayed in church.

### 3. How effective is the religious education?

#### **3A: How high are standards in RE and how well do learners' achieve? Why?**

Standards in RE are high, and match those in maths. We use the agreed syllabus and QCA national guidelines for assessment.

#### **3B: How effective are learning and teaching in RE?**

RE is well taught by class teachers, all of whom are non-specialists. Our RE coordinator supports them to deliver the curriculum according to the agreed syllabus.

#### **3C: To what extent do learners of all faiths and of none demonstrate a positive attitude towards the subject?**

Pupils are enthusiastic about RE and enjoy lessons and visits.

#### **3D: How well does RE contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners?**

All our PSHCE activities are based on Christian values that we find in the Gospels. We use Bible stories a lot to allow pupils to explore moral and social values. This helps their SMSC development.

#### **3E: To what extent does RE promote the distinctive Christian character of the school together with an understanding of other faiths?**

As we are a controlled school, we do not teach denominational RE, but we do try to reflect Christianity and other faiths in our RE teaching.

#### **3F: How important is RE in the life of the school and how is it demonstrated?**

RE is as important as other subjects, and has its own co-ordinator.

#### **4. How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?**

##### **4A: How well do the headteacher and foundation governors promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school?**

- The school's Christian foundation is explicit in the mission statement and promoted through the daily life of the school. The school's vision and confidence for the future is reflected in the excellent new building and community sports facilities.
- We convey our Christian vision for the school through staff meeting discussions, the mission statement, meetings with pupils and parents, and our regular newsletters.
- We promote ourselves as a church school with high expectations through new governor induction, meetings and discussions with new parents and in assemblies for pupils. Our two foundation governors (one is the rector who attends collective worship half-termly and all school services held in church) provide good support.
- The rector is part of the local team ministry and supports this and another local school. A church children's group meets each Thursday after school and is supported by members of the parish church. It has run successfully for over ten years and continues to be very popular and well attended.
- The school's Christian foundation is made explicit to all applicants by including the school's mission statement in the applicant's pack. A supportive and sympathetic attitude towards the school's Christian ethos is an essential requirement for staff.
- Prayers are said in classes at the end of each morning (grace) and afternoon sessions (evening prayer). Children are encouraged to write their prayers for collective worship.
- Foundation governors uphold the Christian tradition in their work with us and promote links with the parish church.

##### **4B: How effectively do the headteacher, senior management and governors encourage, monitor and challenge the school community to realise its Christian vision?**

- All are aware of the school's Christian aims and ethos, which are explicit in the mission statement and implicit in the ethos and daily life of the school.
- All staff have opportunities to attend diocesan training events, if they wish.
- The RE co-ordinator and RE governor monitor RE as part of the school's monitoring cycle. The worship co-ordinator and worship governor monitor worship and report back to the governing body.
- School and church events are reported to governors through the head's report. The school's self-evaluation takes account of the school's Christian ethos and, when necessary, the school improvement plan has priorities that link to the school's status as a church school.
- We have made improvements based on the areas for development in the previous section 48 report. A cross has been in place since the new building was opened. A programme of whole-school, class-led collective worship is now in place.

##### **4C: How valued do staff feel and how are they involved in putting the vision into practice?**

- The headteacher is well supported and encouraged by governors and clergy.

- No opportunities are offered at present for staff to focus on their own spiritual development.

**4D: To what extent are all stakeholders, including learners and their parents, involved in evaluating the school's progress?**

- We have had two Cathedral days two years ago, including one with our rector. Headteacher and rector have attended one diocesan conference. The headteacher has attended several services in our Cathedral. The headteacher and a local church member have contributed to a diocesan training event. The new school was dedicated by the Bishop a special service.
- The governor representative for RE monitors lessons. A Foundation governor and chair have carried out observations of collective worship. A Foundation governor evaluates church services.
- Views are collected through annual parents' and pupils' questionnaires.
- The headteacher regularly has lunch with pupils and through discussion listens to their views.
- We have used some National Society guidance from 2005 about worship, but contact with the National Society is not regular.

**4E: How effective is the partnership between the school, the church and the local community, including the parents?**

- We have regular visits by the clergy and we host the church children's club. A member of the parish church leads some craft projects in school.
- Prayers were requested and are said regularly for the school in PCC meetings.
- We have links with other denominations through the annual visits of Gideon International. A local Methodist preacher gave the children's address at the Harvest Festival in 2006.
- The school website has links to local parish churches and Cathedral. Collections at school services in the church support the work of the parish church.
- Parents and carers support the school services held in church. These are very well attended, with sometimes 50 parents and governors.
- A series of visits is planned for new pupils and the school works closely with local secondary schools when pupils transfer at the end of Year 6.