

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Abberley Parochial Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

ABBERLEY
WORCESTER
WR6 6AA

Diocese: Worcester

LA: Worcestershire

Dates of inspection: 6th July 2006

Date of last inspection: February, 1996

School's Unique reference number: 116780

Headteacher: Mrs Jennifer Taylor

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Ann Capell 197

School context

Abberley Parochial Primary is a small rural primary school with pupils aged 4 -11, serving its local village and the surrounding area. The original Victorian building has been extended and modernised to provide attractive new accommodation. Although the school lacks a hall, it is in other respects well equipped to meet the needs of all its pupils.

Summary Judgement

Abberley is an outstanding school. The Mission Statement of 'We Care' lies at the heart of the school and is practised by all: learners, staff, governors and parents. Christian values represented by the 'C' in 'We Care' are an essential part of the school's work. Relationships are outstanding and there is real sense of a team working together in a family atmosphere where older pupils help the young. Each area of the school displays Christian symbols and learners talk openly about the value of prayer. The strength of this firm Christian ethos enables the school to look outwards with confidence and engage with the worldwide church as well as celebrating and valuing the diversity of other faiths and cultures through visits, visitors and overseas links. The school's self-evaluation process is secure.

Established strengths

- The outstanding care and support given to all pupils within the clear structured framework of the Christian faith;
- The quality of relationships between all those connected with the school;
- The strong emphasis given to worship as an essential part of each day;
- Articulate and responsive pupils whose behaviour is exemplary;
- The outstanding leadership of the Headteacher, supported by a committed and able staff and governors;
- The positive support given by parents who see the school as a vital part of the community.

Focus for development

- Continue to involve learners in the planning and delivery of collective worship;
- Continue the development of family worship;
- Ensure that Foundation Governors have a formal opportunity to report on the church school status to the governing body.

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

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of all learners in an outstanding way. The mission statement in the 'child speak' of 'We Care' lies at the heart of the school's work. Learners spoke about their happiness at school and as a consequence were enthusiastic about their learning, particularly when they learned by 'doing'. A parent spoke about her child going to school 'with a smile on her face' through difficult times. Learners have a clear sense of responsibility for others, from circle time with the youngest pupils who showed their care for each other and the importance of talking positively about their classmates, to the boy in class 6 who had the confidence to try and solve his own problems before going to a member of staff. Where difficulties arise there is a clear sense that learners will be given a second chance and pupils spoke about the structure of the behaviour policy. Parents valued staff who dealt problems in a 'calm and discrete manner.' The school environment is outstanding in the way in which it emphasises the Christian foundation. Each classroom has a quiet corner where learners can sit quietly, reflect or write prayers which are displayed on 'prayer trees'. The pupils speak about prayer

without embarrassment and had great joy in 'talking to God'. During a wet lunchtime three girls sat in their class RE role-play area, a synagogue, wearing skull caps and writing prayers. Displays of a high standard and covering Christian themes are in evidence around the school as well as the celebration of the worldwide church and other faiths and cultures. The school has an international week and sponsors a child in Africa.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

The impact of collective worship on the learner is outstanding. Collective worship occupies a central part in the daily life of the school. Consultation with pupils has led to a change of time so that pupils and staff do not feel rushed. The content is lively and varied from class assemblies to a monthly family worship session in the village hall using African drumming, dance and descriptions written and read by pupils and involving two of the school's four classes. The school lacks a hall for worship but good use is made of a mobile classroom which is arranged with a table, cross, candle and water feature and displays on appropriate themes. Themes for worship are chosen by staff and pupils and planned with the Collective Worship Governor, taking into account the lectionary. Learners enjoy worship particularly those sessions which they plan and participate in and they are well behaved. Learners spoke about the importance of 'coming together and celebrating God'. One pupil asked what she would miss about worship if it didn't take place simply said 'everything'. All staff attend and deliver worship sessions and the Rector or Reader participates twice monthly. Family worship has been introduced as a direct result of parental suggestions and is well supported. It should now be taken on to its next stage of development. The school is developing a Eucharist Service with support from the PCC, and Festival Services in the church or village hall are well supported by parents and those who live in the parish. Evaluation of worship takes place with the Foundation Governor and Headteacher but there are no formal records kept of this evaluation. Good use is made of Diocesan events at the cathedral and worldwide through Scholars 2 Schools, organised by the British Council, enabling students to come in to talk about their own faiths during school worship.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding. The Headteacher strongly supports the Christian ethos of the school to parents, staff and the local community. She regularly promotes the school, its achievements and events in the parish magazine. All the documentation makes clear the Christian status. Governors have recently updated the mission statement and have produced a 'child speak' version. Foundation Governors spoke of their mission as promoting a school which encouraged all to be 'caring, show respect and be thoughtful'. Collective worship and RE have their own development plan and are well resourced. The governors also have the advantage, as a result of foundation status, of a trust fund which provides extra resources for the school. Monitoring of worship and RE is channelled through the curriculum committee but the Foundation Governors do not formally report to the governing body about aspects of the church status. One Foundation Governor is also a Reader and has strong and productive pastoral links with the school. She has started a weekly Fish Club, a request from pupils for a Bible study, and membership is growing. Staff feel valued by the leadership and speak about being supported by colleagues during difficulties. They provide excellent Christian role models for learners. Parents and learners views are sought through questionnaires and the 'open house' nature of the school. Both parents and learners could speak about changes made as a result of consultation.