

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Arborfield, Newland & Barkham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Road
Arborfield,
Reading
RG2 9NX

Diocese: OXFORD

LA: Wokingham

Dates of inspection: 19th June 2006

Date of last inspection: 25-27th January 2000

School's Unique reference number: 8723005

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Young

Inspector's name and number: Janet Wiggins NSI 141

Summary Judgement

Arborfield Junior is a good Church school with many strengths. The strong Christian family ethos is reflected in all aspects of school life.

Established strengths

- Commitment to the development of the whole child in a caring Christian environment
- Strong and active links with feeder schools, church teams and the local community
- Very good opportunities are provided for the spiritual and moral development of pupils

Focus for development

- Provide additional opportunities for learners to develop their understanding of Anglican tradition and practice as part of the wider national and worldwide community
- Ensure that the Church school ethos and tradition play a central role when arranging the planned international link

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

The school's commitment to the development of the whole child is supported by the strong Christian ethos and the many opportunities provided for the personal and spiritual growth of pupils. All members of the school community are valued and relationships are characterised by Christian care and concern for others. The level of pupil mobility is high. Good systems are in place to ensure that the academic and personal needs of new pupils are quickly identified and acted upon. This enables new pupils to settle quickly into the life of the school with minimum disruption to the established pupils. Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic when talking about school activities and their learning. Achievements are celebrated at Friday class assemblies to which parents are also invited. Pupils value the School Council and are proud of their role in bringing forward initiatives. They learn how to keep safe and have a growing awareness of how to lead a healthy life style. They formulate their own class rules and behaviour is very good. The recently introduced Peer Mediation scheme provides sound opportunities for social and moral development. Pupils are implementing the scheme with sensitivity and confidence. The outstanding school grounds, including the Labyrinth, support the pupil's spiritual development by encouraging pupils to be quiet and reflective. Links with the feeder infant school are excellent and the "twinning" of classes gives pupils the opportunity to show responsibility and care for the younger children. The stimulating external environment, school trips, visiting groups and local visitors enrich the curriculum. Pupils recognise the value that they bring to their cross-curricular learning. Parents are very enthusiastic and committed partners in their children's education. School and community links are strengthened and enhanced by the regular classroom support given by parents, church members and governors. Parents appreciate the school's open door policy and happy Christian ethos. One parent likened the school to a "Christian family that has extended into the community."

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

Worship plays a central role in the life of the school and celebrates the school's Christian foundation. Staff and governors are in regular attendance. The school and church work together to plan worship themes and content. Members of the church team and the Army Padre regularly lead worship. Pupil knowledge and understanding of major world faiths is supported by the involvement of visitors from other faiths in collective worship. These visitors are able to explain their faith celebrations and answer any questions from pupils. Pupils talk very positively about worship and are enthusiastic participants. They value the range of approaches to religion that they experience. Following a worship session led by the Padre, pupils were able to talk with knowledge and confidence about the Anglican practice of the clergy wearing different vestments at church services and the significance of the different colours used during the Christian church year. Regular "Candletime" is appreciated by pupils as a time for personal reflection and prayer. Collective worship is strongly supported by Religious Education. Worship is also planned into other areas of the curriculum where time is provided for personal reflection and appreciation of the wonder of God's world. A worship series on the meaning of The Lord's Prayer provided sound opportunities for the pupils spiritual and moral development. The resulting classroom work is proudly displayed in the school hall.

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

The Headteacher, staff, governors, church and parents work together to support the strong Christian family ethos of the school and ensure that good community links are maintained and developed. Relationships are very good. The Headteacher and governors are committed to ensuring that all members of the school are well cared for. Staff welfare is supported by the introduction of the "Well Being" initiative. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and play the role of "critical friends". Each governor is linked to a class and a curriculum area. The school has excellent links with the Coombes Infant. Joint pupil activities take place and governors have regular joint meetings. There are strong and productive links with the secondary schools. Regular contact with the church team, army garrison and local community supports the pupils' spiritual and social development. The school has recognised the need to increase the pupils' understanding of the wider world and Anglican tradition and practice. To support this need, the school is currently planning an international school link. Pupil mobility is well managed with the personal, spiritual and academic needs of new pupils being identified and addressed as soon as possible. The Transition Group of governors and staff ensure that the transfer systems work efficiently. The school is committed to a culture of self-evaluation, that is seen to be generally accurate. Governors, parents and pupils are involved in the process to identify current successes and future development needs.

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