

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Berkswell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Lane
BERKSWELL
CV7 7BJ

Diocese of Coventry

LEA: Solihull

Dates of inspection: 2 February 2006

Date of last inspection: 15 March 2000

School's Unique reference number: 104093

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Alison Wellings

Inspector NS 139: Judith Babb

Context of the school

Berkswell Church of England School is set in the heart of a picturesque village. It has one form of entry, and adjacent nursery provision. Some pupils walk to school; others travel by bus or car from neighbouring villages, or from the outskirts of Solihull or Coventry.

Summary Judgement

This school is a fine example of a distinctive church school. Collective Worship and Religious Education are both valued highly, and they influence significantly the personal development of the pupils. Christian principles are overt, and are used to guide the leadership and management of every aspect of school life.

Established strengths

- A welcoming church school ethos with happy pupils
- Inspiring leadership by the headteacher and senior staff
- Well-informed, supportive, and responsive governance
- Highly professional teaching and support staff
- First-class role-modelling by all adults, with excellent relationships
- Meaningful Collective Worship reflecting 'the Anglican tradition'
- High standards in Religious Education
- Sound and effective spiritual and moral development of all pupils
- Imaginative charitable projects and strong community links
- Creativity seen in corridor display, classroom walls, music and art
- Meticulous attention to Health and Safety matters
- Attractive buildings and grounds, maintained with great care

Focus for development

Whilst continuing to develop self-evaluation, already established very well, the school should:

- Implement the plans already drawn up for the development of Religious Education, including appointing a link governor
- Strengthen the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of Collective Worship by setting up a group comprising a foundation governor, pupil, parent, etc. to review and plan at regular intervals.

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

The school makes outstanding provision for the needs of all its learners. ('Pupils and parents are rightly proud of the school' Ofsted 2005). Pupils from minority culture groups are well-integrated, and concern for the wider world is evident (supporting a Berkswell teacher in Malawi). There is a pupils' mission statement ('to live like Jesus taught us'). Personal and social development is given high priority, and there is a volunteer teacher 'charities co-ordinator'. Staff are approachable but firm. Pupils can praise peers (golden letter-box), and express their concerns privately to staff (bubble-bag). Behaviour is excellent. Older pupils support younger (giving them prompts in discussion with the inspector!), and ensuring that they receive care (after a fall). The school council addresses issues positively (Bullying Week), and gives pupils of all abilities confidence that their opinion has worth. Parents report that any matters they have raised have been addressed promptly (a volunteer received a letter of apology from a pupil who misbehaved). New entrants and visitors are made most welcome. The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of clubs.

What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is outstanding, honouring the Anglican tradition. The headteacher often leads, and all staff respond positively. Two local Christian groups (one of parents and church members) make special presentations regularly. Pupils enter reverently to a hall full of colour, candlelight, and music. There is pupil participation, from helping to hold 'props' to playing instruments. The act of worship is prayerful, with reflective moments of silence. Pupils often say 'The Lord's Prayer'. Singing is excellent and enjoyable. There are visitors (parents, governors) for special occasions at school or in church. A pupils' worship group helps to plan whole-school worship, and older pupils assist younger ones with planning for class worship. Lessons learnt in assembly are remembered throughout the day ('We have to listen to the voice of God') because the message is clearly conveyed. Worship is monitored and evaluated, and is noted in the school improvement plan.

How effective is the Religious Education in the school?

Religious Education is very effective, with outstanding features. Its influence extends to Foundation Stage pupils. The recently-appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic, well-organised and visionary. The subject enjoys high status, and co-ordination activities take place in full staff meeting or in-service training days. All staff enjoy teaching the subject, confident in very effective planning. Standards are high. Key Stage 1 pupils have a very good vocabulary ('grateful'; 'sacrifice'). Written work shows a grasp of meaning in Bible stories, and pupils can apply the moral to their lives. By the end of KS2 pupils have studied Christianity in depth, and can make comparisons with other religions. Teaching methods ('dreaming') and careful questions encourage spiritual development. There is a good range of books and artefacts readily available. The PTA and the Trustees give generous support. Chosen visitors enhance the lessons. Reports to parents, pupil interviews, and levelled marking track progress well.

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

Overall, the leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding. The headteacher has a dynamic, detailed personal vision for the school. Pupils often take part in diocesan events. Two trustees are governors, with seven foundation governors, making a strong church presence. They are committed to the vision of a Christian school (staff appointments, leavers' bibles), and several of them provide good links with the world beyond school (national charities; the parish magazine; Mothers' Union). Prayer is not usual at meetings. The rector visits classes, is a governor, contributes to Religious Education, and leads worship weekly. Aspects of church school status feature regularly in the SIP. The school logo and

mission statement consistently reflect the church links. Parents are very supportive of the school (high attendance rates). Christian symbols are evident throughout the building (including illustrations of Christian values in the hall) and in policies. Pupils say grace before meals (including at parties), and at the end of the day. Spiritual development of all staff is recognised as desirable (in SIP). Pupils' work is on show in the church rooms, and the Ofsted report headlines were printed in the parish magazine.

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