

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Bladon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Park Street  
Bladon Woodstock  
OX20 1RW

#### **Diocese of Oxford**

Oxfordshire LEA  
SIAS inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2006  
Previous S23 inspection: March 2000  
URN: 123119  
Headteacher: Mrs Sue Hawker  
SIAS Inspector NS151 : Lyn Field

#### **Summary Judgement**

Bladon is a good church school where the children feel strongly that the way Christian values underpin the life of the school makes a significant impact on their lives.

#### **Established Strengths**

- The way that children contribute to and promote the Christian ethos of the school.
- The commitment and excellent role models provided by the headteacher and staff.
- The impact of Religious Education and collective worship on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children.

#### **Focus for development**

- To create opportunities to evaluate and celebrate the school's distinctiveness.
- To involve pupils in an evaluation of worship.

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

The school is outstanding in meeting the needs of all learners through its distinctive Christian character. This happens because Christian values are deeply embedded in the school's whole approach to educating its children. Teachers naturally discuss subjects at a deeper level than mere knowledge requires and so children's personal development is outstanding. They benefit from taking part in local festivals as well as high profile national events through the huge commitment of this small staff. The children also explain that the importance of the residential visit is learning to live with people you don't know, working as a team and overcoming your fears. Pupils are very proud of their school and see themselves as having equal responsibility alongside the adults in what it achieves. A key reason for this is the excellent relationships in the school and the role models that all adults, including volunteers and governors, provide for the children. Older pupils take care of younger ones and organise equipment for them at lunchtime. The school places great emphasis on the link between responsibility and achievement and it is this that raises children's self-esteem. It is clearly seen in children's excellent spiritual and cultural awareness. They speak enthusiastically, for example, about how their work with Blenheim Palace helps them identify their links with the past and how the wide range of charities they support gives them a global sense that people live their lives from different starting points.

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

Collective worship makes a good impact on the school community. Collective worship is part of daily life in the school in spite of the difficulties posed by having no hall. All staff share the planning and leading of worship. There are regular, popular visitors including the rector, curate and a member of the Witney Council of Churches who all contribute the broader life of the school. The excellent relationships between children and adults ensure worship is taken very seriously. Most children benefit from the times of prayer and reflection. Some talk about how prayer has become part of their own lives. They see worship as providing the guidelines for what is right and wrong explaining that the morals in the stories of Jesus are the basis of their school rules. Children benefit from the spiritual opportunities in worship, valuing times of silence in special remembrance assemblies and reflective time when they are asked to consider the meaning of stories. There is no evaluation of worship and this is a missed opportunity because pupils have a very clear idea of how they would like to participate more. They already prepare their own leavers' service and have written a nativity play.

**How effective is the Religious Education in the school?**

Religious education is rated by children as one of the strengths of the school because it is really fun. It makes a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding because it is taught with relevance to children's lives and encourages positive attitudes. The effective co-ordinator ensures that children really engage with the beliefs and values of their own and other traditions through visits to various places of worship and talking with members of other faiths. The tasks they are set have real meaning such as designing a stole and hassocks for the Church.

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

There is good leadership and management of the school as a church school. The ethos of the school as a church school is such an integral part of every aspect of its management and organisation that staff and governors find it difficult to separate what might be distinctively Christian. It is the children who talk passionately about their school, how its values help them understand their links with the past and their responsibility for the present. Like their parents, they believe RE and worship have an important place in the school and they talk about personal faith and prayer without embarrassment. This is because the headteacher leads the school in a way that enables everyone involved to feel they have a real ownership of the school as a community. Parents say that bullying wouldn't happen here because the children simply would not allow it to get to that point. Governors have good knowledge of the school and promote its ethos. Together with parents they take an active role in the curriculum, providing additional staff for music, art and residential visits. It would not be expressed as such but in its teamwork, this school reflects the body of Christ. There are good links with the Church and this is seen as the natural venue for the celebration of key festivals and events in the life of the school. Wider links with the Witney Council of Churches, Christchurch Cathedral and Blenheim Palace make a significant contribution to children's development and reflect the school's commitment to the development of the whole child. There is no time set aside to formally evaluate the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. This limits its ability to celebrate the richness of its ethos and to understand how this is achieved in order to secure it for the future. Parents, governors and clergy feel strongly that the school's Christian values enable the children to flourish and many choose the school for this reason.