

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Blue Coat Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Symn Lane,
Wotton-under-Edge,
Gloucestershire
GL12 7BD

Diocese: Gloucester

LA: Gloucestershire

Dates of inspection: 23rd May 2006

Date of last inspection: 23rd March 2001

School's Unique reference number: 115734

Headteacher: Mr Phillip Williams

Inspector's name and number: Chris Hammant, NS009

School context

Blue Coat VA Church of England school is a large primary school of 326 pupils. The school serves the town of Wotton-under-Edge, which is a predominantly white and mono-cultural in make up. The school has a new, modern, purpose-built building with community use. In addition to the school facilities there is also a pre-school nursery, and before and after school care is provided for children.

Summary Judgement

Blue Coat School is an outstanding school with a strong Christian ethos. This ethos has a real impact on the lives and education of the learners in the community. It is a true reflection of its mission statement, which focuses on the value of each individual as a person made in the image of God.

Established strengths

- A strong Christian ethos that provides the foundation on which learning and living together are built.
- Excellent relationships between all members of the community.
- A positive and encouraging learning and worshipping environment.
- Good and effective leadership by the head teacher and RE and Worship co-ordinator, supported by the governors.

Focus for development

- The Christian values and Mission Statement of the school to be included in the Prospectus to highlight their importance for all stakeholders.
- Foundation Governors to work with the worship co-ordinator to fulfil their responsibilities regarding evaluation of Collective Worship and together to devise strategies for this purpose.
- The Governing Body to become involved in the on-going self-evaluation process of the school as a church school in order to monitor its effectiveness and to maintain its distinctiveness.

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

The school makes excellent provision to meet the needs of all learners. It has a clear Christian ethos, which permeates all aspects of school life and is actively supported by both parents and governors. Good communications and an openness of spirit create a sense of worth in all members of the school community. Relationships between all members of the community reflect values of care, respect, empathy, patience, forgiveness and understanding. Learners speak of the school as a place to pray, solve problems and see friends. A beautiful mosaic displayed in the school provides a focus for the school community to reflect on God's love and his provision for the world. Prospective parents and visitors need to know how important the Christian ethos and values are in the life of the school and therefore these need to be more explicitly stated in the school prospectus. Learners' spiritual development is nurtured through worship and across the curriculum. They are well behaved, helpful and courteous. Children willingly work to raise funds for various charities. Standards of achievement in the school are good.

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

The impact of collective worship on the school community is excellent. Worship is absolutely fundamental to the life of the school. The worship co-ordinator meets each week with the whole staff to explore all aspects of the worship themes, which are often drawn from the RE syllabus. This meeting provides a basis for planning for

whole school, class, Open the Book and key stage acts of worship. Children take part eagerly in worship. There is a time for reflection in worship. Learners understand the contribution prayer can make to their own and other's lives. They enjoy visits to the parish church for Christmas and Harvest services, which are very well attended by parents. Worship, in all its various forms, contributes significantly to learners' spiritual development. Some learners openly acknowledge a belief in God. Children's achievements, both in and out of school, are celebrated in collective worship. Aspects of the Anglican tradition are used in some acts of worship both in church and in school. Pupils and staff contribute most effectively to evaluating acts of worship. Foundation governors are not involved in this process.

How effective is the religious education?

Religious Education in the school is very good. Learners very much enjoy RE lessons, which are well planned, very well taught and creative. The impact of RE on learners is shown in their positive and enthusiastic attitude to the subject. The standard of work is good and there are opportunities for learners to express their beliefs and ideas whatever their faith background. The subject leader is very committed to her role and supports staff in their planning, and encourages them in their teaching. She regularly observes and feeds back on teaching and has a working plan for the development of the subject. Staff and pupils have evaluated the teaching and learning of RE to inform its development. The parish priest, the assigned governor for RE, has taught RE lessons but has not been involved in evaluating the subject. Support and advice has been sought from the Diocese on occasions. The school is currently in the process of adjusting RE planning to address both the integrated curriculum and the requirements of the recently revised Agreed Syllabus. RE displays of work around the school are of a good standard. There are no reflective displays or spaces in classrooms, neither is there a dedicated space in the school for children to reflect, think quietly or pray.

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 very good. The head teacher values each child as an individual worthy of care and respect. The quality of his Christian leadership contributes significantly to the success of the school. The Christian purpose of the school is expressed clearly in the Mission Statement and in the RE and Worship policies. Links with the local parish church are good. Parents express great confidence in the ability of the school to teach and care for their children. For many parents it is important that the school has a church foundation. Relationships between pupils, staff, governors, parents and the local community are very good. Staff feel very much involved in the decisions taken in the school and feel appreciated. However, opportunities for their personal spiritual development are limited. The governing body has not contributed to the self-evaluation of the school as a church school, though this has been addressed by the head teacher and RE subject leader.

SIAS report May 2006 Blue Coat C of E VA Primary School Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire GL12 7BD