

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Christchurch Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road,
Coseley,
Bilston,
West Midlands.
WV14 8YD

Diocese of Worcester : Dudley MBA

SIAS inspection: 6 March 2006

Previous S23 inspection: 14th, 15th, 17th & 18th February 2000

URN: 103838

Headteacher: Mrs. P. Hazelhurst

SIAS Inspector: Mr R Sharples

Context

Christchurch C.E. School has a roll of 339 (yr R – 6) and serves an urban area in the industrial Black Country. The main buildings have been imaginatively developed to provide a stimulating environment for the pupils.

Summary Judgement

Christchurch is a very good school which offers some outstanding opportunities to its learners. The pupils understand their roles in the school clearly and are empowered, through an imaginative variety of strategies, to make excellent progress.

Established strengths

- A powerful learning environment which stimulates all the pupils in its care to become competent independent learners.
 - A very well structured pattern of behaviour management which builds up the children's own self esteem and enables them to regulate their own social behaviour.
 - A good spiritual context which is experienced by the pupils in different ways throughout their working day.

Focus for development

- Set up a programme to review worship, with vicar and the foundation governors alongside the staff and headteacher, in a similar way to other aspects of school life which are reviewed periodically.
- Establish a regular pattern of agenda items concerned with the Church Foundation of the school at governors' meetings.

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

Through its distinctive Christian character the school meets the needs of all learners in an outstanding way. The school's claim to '...hold at the forefront of what we do a vision of the kingdom of God...' is borne out in the life of the school. The atmosphere is very positive, with pupils' work being celebrated in attractive displays around the school. The children are clearly happy in their school; they enjoy celebrating their own and others achievements, for example through the 'golden gossip box'. All the children spoken with (in all age groups) during the inspection were very articulate about their school being a 'learning school'; all were concerned to discuss the school in terms of what it offered them. The consistent use of learning strategies throughout the school linked to the school's positive approach to behaviour through identified choices and the use of the consequence table gives the learners control over their own learning. The children also spoke of their confidence in the staff and the opportunities that the staff were able to offer them. Learners' response to staff was very warm and enthusiastic; the staff themselves had a lovely, courteous manner with the children which generated this confidence and security.

The parents are generally very complimentary about the school and its impact on their children. They are especially impressed by the expression of Christian values through the positive approach to children's learning needs and in the moral underpinning of the behaviour policy which has led to discernable improvements in behaviour of children at home.

The overall impact of all these elements is to create an outstandingly positive and cooperative environment in which children feel valued, supported and encouraged in their learning and their relationships.

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

The impact of collective worship on the school's learners is good. Children speak positively of worship and the elements in which they participate; the prayers, songs and especially the class assemblies where they have prepared the material themselves. The major festivals are celebrated, at the time of the inspection a voluntary Lent group was meeting and a Lenten display being established. Dramatic aspects of these festivals such as lighting the Advent Wreath are particularly significant to the children and they are able to talk about these aspects with appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding. The responses of the children during worship using prayer and song are appropriate and enthusiastic though some of the children identified a degree of sameness in, for example, some of the songs.

Especially moving are the circle times in the foundation stage over snack time where the children are quiet and contemplative around a candle – the inclusion of a short prayer completes the activity. The impact of this time has a profound effect on such young children who talk of these experiences in very warm terms.

While all of these aspects are good the children are somewhat confused about the various aspects of the pattern of worship especially the role of classroom based worship. The mixing of celebratory presentations for learning and elements of worship seems to lead to a loss of the significance of the worshipful elements for some children. Aspects of R.E. are woven into the work of the school, and are used to contribute to the spiritual development of the children through, for example the use of stillness during visits to the church.

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 good. The links between governors and the school are good in many areas. This is demonstrated especially in the development of the ethos and the buildings which both have a very positive impact on the work of the children and staff. The Headteacher is very clear and enthusiastic about the school's vision and staff spoke of appreciating their involvement in the development of ideas such as the learning skills programme in the school and show enthusiasm for the development of such motivational elements such as the brain gym and early morning activity sessions. These links are not clearly apparent in the relationship between the governors and the development and monitoring of collective worship in school. This has led to some isolation of the Headteacher in the leadership of this area which, as a consequence, has not received the attention it deserves in recent years.

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