

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Controlled School

Christchurch Lane,
Lichfield
WS13 8AY

Diocese: Lichfield

LEA: Staffordshire

Date of SIAS Inspection: March 31st 2006

Date of last inspection: January 2001

School's Unique Reference Number: 124457

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Sheila Gaffiney

Inspector: Revd Huw D Bishop 344

Context of the School

Christ Church CE School is a large two form entry school of some 380 pupils. It has the capacity to admit 420 and admissions to the school are increasing steadily as a result of a new housing development containing private and social housing. The school's catchment area is mainly white, with 11.5% of pupils of coming from an ethnic background. 1.2% of students have statements of special educational need. The curriculum successfully integrates all areas of learning so that pupils are excited by all that the school offers and eager to participate fully in all areas of school life. The accommodation has been refurbished extensively in recent years and is used to best advantage by classes to promote teaching and learning of a high standard.

Summary Judgement

Christ Church CE School is a good Church School with outstanding features. Pupils and staff and parents are very aware that the school's life is firmly rooted in Christian values that are nurtured by the close relationship with the parish church. There is a profound sense of friendliness, energy and genuine caring for the individual within a spirit of Christian love.

Established Strengths

- The active Christian ethos of the school that informs the values and aspirations of all who work within its community.
- The outstanding leadership of the Headteacher and the impact this has had on the school's development in a relatively short period of time.
- The outstanding quality of collective worship which impacts fully on the learning, knowledge and understanding of pupils.
- The school's 'inclusive' strategy.
- The proactive way in which the school has embraced the 'Voice of the Stakeholder' and incorporated its findings into the School Improvement Plan.

Focus for Development

- Continue to strengthen current and future links with the parish church
- Introduce the use of suitable aspects of Anglican liturgy into school acts of worship. (This aspect has already been identified in the School Improvement Plan)

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

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of all learners well. A Christian ethos, informed by a historic Anglican structure and values is right at the heart of Christ Church School. However, Governors actively promote an open and inclusive aspect which extends beyond the Anglican boundaries thus enabling a purposeful and proactive sense of mission and growth within a rapidly expanding parish 'catchment'. All pupils are secure in the knowledge that they are unique and important as individuals, and there are established systems which celebrate success and achievement and encourage all to strive for personal growth and fulfilment. "I always feel that there is someone I can talk to" was the comment of a Year 5 student on the School Council, and this was re-iterated several times by many others. All staff place learners' work and personal development in a Christian context by the use of appropriate words, actions and visual displays that help to focus the mind on spiritual and moral values. The school is a calm and ordered Christian community where relationships are conducted in an inclusive and welcoming manner. Pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings and do so with ease and in a

considered way. Christian artefacts and symbols around the school remind the community of their distinctiveness, but this is not a forced experience which alienates any individual. The school makes extensive use of the parish church to meet curriculum demands and the re-ordering programme of existing buildings has ensured that pupils and staff maintain a fresh and vibrant approach to their work. Pupils' social skills are well developed and they enjoy every opportunity to interact with adults in a mature way. Pupils' spiritual development is reinforced by moments of reflection and prayer at times other than during Collective Worship. This is to be commended particularly. Members of the School Council reported of their enjoyment of worship, and that the themes and key messages were closely linked to personal and school responses to global as well as local and national ethical situations. They were also able to discuss how worship experiences in other faiths are relevant and important. This was regarded as vital to ensure that they were able to show respect to all faith communities.

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

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good. Collective Worship is conducted to a very good standard and gives a sense of purpose to all pupils. They are eager to share their talents and success and the entire school celebrates this without deference to any particular Key Stage. Pupils spoke of the quality of worship in a most positive manner to an outstanding degree. This was evidenced by a representation of the Easter message which was lively, and bound up in messages of repentance and forgiveness. This impacted strongly on all pupils who fully understood all that they had portrayed.

A member of staff has responsibility for worship, and has, over a period of time, developed a management system to establish quality and rigour to this vital part of school life. This is evaluated thoughtfully, with results recorded and shared with the school community. Close links with the parish church, including the regular weekly visit of the Parish Priest to the school ensures that the Anglican presence is maintained. Because of the school's growing numbers, a dignified worship experience for the whole school in the parish church is impossible, although there are plans to re-establish this on a Key Stage basis. Similarly, it is hoped to use the Eucharist as an opportunity to enrich the school as a Christian community using Anglican liturgy. Collective Worship at Christ Church School is carefully linked to the pupil's learning experience and is not a 'bolt on' exercise. The use of Christian artefacts and symbols, Music, Drama and Art contribute to worship as a living experience where time for reflection and participation are used well.

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 quality of leadership shown by the Headteacher contributes significantly to the success of the school. She has a very clear vision about how the school can develop into a wholly effective place using resources and accommodation issues to best effect. The Governing Body gives effective support in the management of the school and the particular proactive contribution of the Chair of Governors is greatly valued by the Headteacher, staff and pupils. However, the Foundation Governors need to develop further their monitoring role of the school as a Church School. The school's Christian purpose is evidenced in the very good quality of the relationships and interactions by all staff and pupils. Parents express their full support of the way members of staff go well beyond the required point to ensure that pupils' educational and social needs are met fully. They are very appreciative of the school's special qualities as a Church school which they see as very important for their children. All staff feel valued and respected and they are fully committed and involved in creating a positive Christian ethos for the school. Whilst the Headteacher, parish priest and staff evaluate the Christian dimension of the school's life, this could also be an increased focus for the full governing body. Pupils rise to the challenge of Christian action through fundraising to engage with those in need. They also recognise and respect the values and the opportunities that are on offer, and are not hesitant in commending their school as an outstanding place to learn and grow up.