

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Dorrington Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Road
Dorrington
Shrewsbury.
Shropshire
SY5 7JL

Diocese: Hereford

Local Authority: Shropshire

Date of inspection: July 5th 2006

Date of last inspection: November 1999

School's Unique reference number: 123545

Headteacher: Mrs G A Reynolds

Inspector's name and number: Mr B E Allaway NS.397

School context

Dorrington C of E Aided Primary School is a small school with 70 pupils on roll. Most pupils come from the village and surrounding area. The school was extended in 2002 to provide new office accommodation. Pupil numbers have risen by 15% since the last inspection.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dorrington as a Church of England school is good and it has some outstanding features. Pupils and staff work very well together within a caring Christian family community. Relationships at all levels are very good. The school's partnership with the church is strong and the school's mission statement is clearly evident in the day-to-day work of the school.

Established strengths

- The leadership of the school is outstanding.
- Collective worship presents pupils with rich and varied experiences which promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Standards in religious education (RE) are good because the subject is valued, it is taught well and resourced imaginatively.

Focus for development

- Continue to develop planning for RE as aspects of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education are taught for the first time.
- Ensure that the best examples of evaluative marking in religious education are promoted throughout the school.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to plan, organise and lead acts of worship.

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

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners. The school's Christian aims and values are clearly evident in practice. The school's logo and the Christian symbols in each class are tangible reminders of the school's foundation and are valued and understood by the pupils. The pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour in and around the school are very good. They feel happy and secure. The head and the staff have high expectations of the pupils and the example they set has a positive impact on the pupils. A varied and rich curriculum provides pupils with valuable opportunities to explore issues of human concern and care for the environment. Pupils' enjoy reflecting upon the wonders of the natural world. The Foundation Governors provide good support and know the school well. Links with the parish church are strong and pupils have a good understanding of the major Christian festivals which they celebrate in the church. The church is also used well as a valuable resource for areas of the curriculum such as RE, art and science.

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

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good. Worship is well planned and dignified and makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school, despite taking place in rather cramped accommodation. Pupils participate well in worship by sharing their music, their ideas and prayers. Singing is tuneful and spirited and contributes to a special sense of occasion. A calm and reflective atmosphere is created in worship through the sensitive use of music and relevant artefacts. Pupils appreciate this. The Lord's Prayer is a regular feature of the worship

and the older pupils have a good understanding of its meaning and how it relates to their own lives. The pupils have responded honestly to the school seeking their opinions about worship. This consultation has resulted in longer periods of reflection being incorporated into worship. Many pupils are confident and capable and are eager to take more responsibility in planning and leading worship. Pupils and parents appreciate being able to use the parish church for occasional worship and pupils have a good understanding of the value of the church within the community. Pupils particularly enjoy worship which is led by a member of the clergy team, partly because personal anecdote is used very well to engage pupils' interest. Good quality worship of this kind is well summed up by a pupil who said *'these assemblies help me to know more about God and the life of Jesus...knowing more about the Bible helps you to do good things in your life'*. Good links have been established between worship and religious education and they enable pupils to appreciate how religious commitment impacts on the lives of believers.

How effective is the religious education?

Religious Education is good. It is planned conscientiously, taught well and resourced imaginatively. Pupils have a good understanding of the principles of Christianity and the life and teaching of Jesus. Pupils are also introduced to aspects of Judaism and Sikhism. Good resources are used to motivate the pupils and maintain their interest. Older pupils recalled their understanding of the Golden Temple at Amritsar very well because they had experienced a 'virtual tour' via the internet. Pupils achieve well and standards are in line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. The school rightly plans to continue to develop a scheme of work and essential resources to meet the requirements of some new aspects of the Agreed Syllabus. RE reports to parents are detailed and informative and indicate that appropriate arrangements are in place to assess pupils' progress. Teachers have a good understanding of what their pupils know and can do. Cross curricular links with literacy and art are used well to strengthen the RE curriculum and make it relevant to the pupils. Pupils of all ages have covered a good range of work during the year because teachers and pupils value RE and sufficient time is allocated to the teaching. Teachers mark the children's work regularly. In the best cases pupils are given helpful feedback about how well they have done and how they might improve their work. Currently the school's marking policy is not implemented consistently throughout the school. However this has already been identified by the school as an area for development.

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 outstanding. A strong Christian ethos is promoted consistently by staff and by the foundation governors all of whom promote the school's mission statement well. The school's success in achieving the Schools for Health Gold Award is an indicator of the importance the school gives to the health and well being of the whole child. Religious education and worship are co-ordinated efficiently and records and planning are evaluated regularly. Consequently pupils experience a well considered curriculum within a caring environment and achieve well. Very conscientious and constructive lesson monitoring by the Headteacher and a commitment to school self evaluation enables the school to know itself very well. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Pupils' behaviour is good because the Head and all staff have high expectations and the school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently. A visiting member of the clergy team, who is also a Foundation Governor, provides sensitive and effective leadership in worship and engages pupils very well. The School Council provides pupils with good opportunities to formally share their views and opinions. Pupils are proud to represent their peers on the Council and feel that their opinions are listened to.