

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Fairford Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

The Park
Leafield Road,
Fairford
GL7 4JQ

Diocese of Gloucester

Gloucestershire LEA

Date of inspection 28 March 2006

Date of last inspection September 1999

School's URN 115622

Headteacher Mrs Jane Sparling

SIAS Inspector NS 113, Mrs Carole May

Context

This is a school of average size set in an historic Cotswold market town. Most pupils are of white British backgrounds. There is one pupil for whom English is an additional language. Approximately 8% of pupils come from Air Force families. There are a below average number of pupils with special educational needs.

Summary Judgement

The school's distinctive Christian foundation is not readily apparent and is not adequately communicated to pupils, parents or the community. The governors have too little influence on the life of the school. Pupils are cared for well, but the standards achieved are not high enough. Some members of the school community feel that there are barriers to effective communication between them and the head teacher.

Established strengths

- The school promotes personal development well.
- There is an extensive range of extra curricular activities
- The behaviour of pupils is good and they have positive attitudes towards school.

Focus for development

- Develop a shared vision of the school as Church school between the head teacher, senior managers and governing body, and improve communications with the whole school community.
- Raise the profile of the school's distinctive Christian character by involving the foundation governors in planning, checking and evaluating the school's progress as a church school; and, introduce a system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the daily act of worship.
- Improve the quality of planning for, and the assessment of, religious education; and ensure that the subject manager has time to carry out her role effectively.

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

There is little overt evidence that this is a church school. Whilst some classrooms have displays relating to religious education many do not and there are few signs of Christianity in the public areas of the school. The academic needs of all learners are not met sufficiently well because standards are falling and there is insufficient challenge for the most able. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well and make satisfactory progress. Three lessons were seen, one in personal, social and emotional development and two in religious education. The quality of teaching and learning was found to be inconsistent. The work in pupils' books showed that marking did not help move pupils learning forward in religious education. The system used for assessing pupils' work is not sufficiently rigorous to enable teachers to plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Discussions with Year 6 pupils revealed that pupils recall some Bible stories, but are unable to describe what it means to be a believer, or how religious beliefs can affect everyday life. Their knowledge of religions other than Christianity was confused.

The day to day care of pupils is good. Newcomers to school are welcomed with care. Pupils are known by name by all staff, they say that they feel happy and safe in school and have positive attitudes towards most aspects of school life. They speak enthusiastically about art, music, sport and French and take part in the wide range of extra curricular activities provided for them with enjoyment. They readily take on responsibilities around the school. There is an active and effective school council that regularly raises money for charity. The older pupils help the younger ones at playtimes, in the dining room and with reading. The congregations of local churches are involved effectively in activities within the school. Some members of the local parish church come to help in school with activities such as reading and gardening and playing the piano for acts of worship.

Pupils generally behave well, but examples of restless behaviour were seen during the daily act of collective worship for Years R to Y2. This occurred because some classes took a long time to arrive and others had to sit still for too long, however, the content was relevant to needs and the age of the pupils and the time of year. The story of Easter week was told well. Older pupils get noisy and inattentive when the pace of lessons is too slow.

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

This is satisfactory overall. From time to time concerts and services are held in the parish church, and occasionally the church building is used to support educational topics. Last year, one class took part in a television series about historic churches, but, the head teacher feels that the distance is too great for more frequent visits. However, a member of the clergy leads an act of worship every fortnight. On alternate weeks, a team from a variety of local churches leads worship. This has a positive effect in that it enhances pupils' knowledge of the Christian faith and enhances the pupils' enjoyment of Bible stories. Plans are kept for the daily act of Christian worship, but these are scant. Not all plans indicate that there will be a prayer and there is no system in place for evaluating the quality of worship. Pupils say worship is not one of their favourite activities.

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

At the time of the inspection this is inadequate because the head teacher does not demonstrate sufficient vision of the school as a Church school. Most of the governors are new and the senior management team has only recently been formed, therefore, they have had too little time to implement effective systems within the school. At the time of the inspection there was only one Foundation governor and she is also new to the role. The incumbent has only recently become involved in governors' meetings and, as a result, little has been done recently to ensure that the distinctive Christian character of the school maintains a high profile. The school acknowledges that the role of subject manager for worship and religious education has been neglected recently. A new manager has recently taken over these roles and, as yet, has no time to monitor or evaluate quality of provision or the standards attained. Existing systems of monitoring, evaluation and assessment are not sufficiently rigorous to ensure continuous improvement.