

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

High Bickington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Umberleigh,
Devon,
EX37 9AY

Diocese Exeter

LEA Devon

Dates of inspection 2 February 2006

Date of last inspection November 2000

School's Unique reference number 113378

Name of Headteacher Mrs Jackie Rudman

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number Miss Susan Barton 162

School Context

High Bickington Church of England Primary School is set in the centre of the village and serves the surrounding rural area. The 67 learners on roll are taught in an enlarged Victorian building dating from 1856 which provides limited facilities. However, the governors, diocese and local education authority are working closely with the community property trust to provide a new school building.

Summary Judgement

High Bickington School is a good Church of England School which is both distinctive and effective.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian atmosphere in which young families are shown love, trust and respect.
- The dedication of all who work and learn to do their best under difficult circumstances.

Focus for development

- Review the format of worship in the week to include the use of the theme on all occasions.
- Formalize the monitoring and evaluation of worship to ensure that there is an agreed understanding and procedure across the school.

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

The distinctive Christian character of the school is good. The school has a welcoming atmosphere in which all the learners are happy in a secure environment. The Christian ethos permeates the life of the school putting the Bible into practice through loving care for all. Special occasions within the school and home are recognized and joy and happiness are enjoyed together along with times of worry, concern and grief shared. All individuals are valued and suggestions put forward through the school council which are considered and respected. A billet box is used for learners to share concerns with teachers which emphasizes the very good relationships held between adults and learners. Religious education and worship are good contributors to the learners' spiritual and moral understanding providing opportunities to learn about and respect other faiths, as seen in the sharing of a Shabbat meal. Thought provoking questions provide opportunities for reflection and time for learners to share personal feelings and significant events in their lives. Learners understand the meaning of some of the parables told by Jesus and are able to identify the difference between right and wrong. Links with the parish church and Methodist church add to the distinctive Christian character of the school. Learners take part in the parish church Christingle Sunday service and flower festival at a neighbouring parish church which add to the learners' spiritual development. The residential visit is held at a Christian Adventure Centre which reinforces the Christian standards in living together.

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

Collective worship makes a good impact on the school community. Worship provides a valuable time of spiritual growth through music, prayer and reflection, as well as listening and sharing, in which learners display good attitudes. Links are made between Biblical teaching and learners' thoughts and, on occasions, well chosen examples from literacy aid understanding. For example, through the theme 'fruits of the spirit' an exploration of 'peace' was made, including learners' personal feelings and experiences as well as sharing 'Just five minutes' by Jill Murphy which ensured the youngest learners were involved. Times of quietness enable those present to bring to mind people, and times of concern and thanks. The village clergy take part regularly in school worship and special services are held in the parish church each term in which the learners take a leading role. This provides for further spiritual growth and understanding. The use on occasions of Anglican responses and the church building helps to provide some insight into Anglican practice.

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 spiritual leadership by the headteacher is greatly valued and a clear Christian vision promoted to ensure a distinctive Christian school is achieved. Support is given by the headteacher both professionally and at a more personal level which shows the trust and respect within which she is held. She promotes the importance of prayer at regular times with staff as well as with families in times of concern. Foundation governors are supportive of the school which is appreciated. The strong team of staff work together to formulate policy and practice which enhances the importance placed on individual learners and reinforces the family atmosphere in which every child matters. Communications between the parish church and school are good with the headteacher ensuring that members of the church are well informed. The close proximity of the church with a combined school and church archway contains church and school notices which ensure the school promotes the church link as well as the church thinking and praying for the school. The strong support by parents is much appreciated and valued and further reinforces children come first.

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