

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Ruishton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Newlands Road,  
Ruishton  
Taunton  
TA3 5JZ

#### Diocese: Bath and Wells

LA: Somerset County Council

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Date of last inspection: 3-4 March 1999

School's Unique reference number: 123822

Headteacher: Mr. Neil Dalton

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jo Curd - 181

#### School context

Ruishton is a small Church primary school with 161 pupils in the village of Ruishton, just east of Taunton. It is a popular school and many of the children travel significant distances to attend. It has a small resource unit for twelve pupils who have very complex learning and physical disabilities. Although pupils come to the school with a range of experiences and abilities overall standards on entry are below the national average.

#### Summary Judgement

Ruishton is a good Church school. Relationships throughout the school are warm, supportive and relaxed and everyone knows they are valued and special. Behaviour is extremely good and all the pupils are cared for very well.

#### Established strengths

- Relationships are warm, relaxed and supportive creating a calm and peaceful atmosphere throughout the school.
- All pupils are cared for well. They show high levels of care and concern for each other, especially for those with learning or physical disabilities.
- High expectations and good use of praise results in extremely good behaviour from all the pupils.

#### Focus for development

- The spiritual development and the school's church foundation should be reviewed more frequently and should feature in the school's development plan.
- Improve monitoring of Religious Education, especially work in books, to ensure that all aspects of its teaching and learning are consistently good.

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

The way the school, through its Christian character, meets the needs of all its learners is good. Broad Christian values effectively underlie the school's ethos of care, respect and inclusion of all. Everybody in the school is valued and well cared for. Consequently most pupils are confident, relaxed and happy. They use their initiative well to show very good care and concern for each other, for example, a Year Six boy led another with learning disabilities into the hall and helped him to remain still and quiet in assembly, some girls effectively comforted another who was upset and a boy ensured that a girl with physical and learning disabilities took a turn in baking. All the pupils learn to communicate by signing so that they can 'talk to everyone in their class in a way they understand'. They use this successfully and spontaneously around the school. Pupils keenly extend their desire to help others outside the school by visiting a home for senior citizens at Christmas and raising money for charity.

Relationships and behaviour throughout the school are excellent, resulting in a very calm and peaceful atmosphere which is conducive to learning. All the pupils are making good progress. Standards are at least in line with the national average. Pupils speak highly of their teachers who they say work hard and make learning fun. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils are generally well prepared for life in a multicultural society, for example learning about different styles of life, art and music. Pupils enjoy participating in a wide range of clubs, such as music and sport, at lunch time and after school. Older pupils are effectively using

their initiative and learning about business and finance through making, buying and selling crafts. Younger pupils raised money to buy a new printer for the classroom. The school community is coping well with current challenges of considerable building work on their site. The pleasant grounds with some beautiful mature trees and new fixed climbing equipment contribute well to pupil's health, exercise and spiritual development.

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

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good. Worship is important in, and central to, the school day, at Ruishton. Pupils speak enthusiastically about Acts of Collective Worship which are positive, relaxed occasions used well for prayer, reflection and quiet. Lighting a candle to demarcate spiritual and administrative aspects of these times is very helpful to all. Pupils are involved well in illustrations, music and practical help. Reflective music helps to create a conducive atmosphere as pupils enter and leave. Timing of worship is organised effectively to meet pupil's and the school's needs. School staff attend whole school Acts of Collective Worship at the beginning and end of each school week successfully involving all members of the community and showing the importance of worship in the school. All pupils gather together on two further days and Wednesdays are used well to meet the needs of younger and older pupils as they meet as two distinct age groups.

Structured Acts of Collective Worship are supplemented well by a daily prayer led, and often written by, pupils in their classrooms and regular services at the local church. Although until very recently this church has been without a vicar, the school has successfully maintained links with it and a range of clergy. The Archdeacon of Taunton dedicated new classrooms in October and the Bishop of Bath and Wells and Rural Dean have also visited recently. The school building has been used by the local church for services during their own building work and for interviews for the new vicar, who started last month. He has already led worship in the school and visited pupils in class. Pupils enjoy the diversity of visitors who come to lead Acts of Collective Worship. They find these interesting 'and fun'! Services in Church each term, including a formal candlelit carol service for the village at Christmas, and the vicar's visits successfully contribute to pupil's understanding of the Anglican tradition.

#### **How effective is the religious education?**

The effectiveness of Religious Education is satisfactory. Some elements of teaching and learning of Religious Education are good. Lessons seen had clear learning objectives, were interesting, well planned and well organised. Pupils were engaged, motivated and very well behaved. Pupils are developing a sound knowledge of beliefs, including Christianity, and their implications for life. Standards are comparable to those expected for their age. Pupils make good progress in their learning from direct teaching and discussion but less from some recorded tasks. Some work is unfinished, ill matched to their learning needs, inaccurate and poorly marked. Religious Education in the school contributes satisfactorily to pupils' spiritual and moral development. The coordinator for Religious Education manages the subject satisfactorily. She has attended training and has good subject knowledge. She supports staff with resources and input from courses. She has very recently begun to monitor some lessons and books but time to identify and rectify areas for development is very limited. Findings from recent monitoring have not yet been implemented.

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

Leadership and management of this church school are satisfactory. The Head Teacher and staff have a clear vision for an inclusive school in which everyone is cared for and valued. They are implementing this well. They have slowly but successfully monitored and reviewed many aspects of their school and brought about change and development. For example improvements in worship since the last Anglican School inspection have been good and issues for action are now securely in place. Other aspects reflecting the school's Church status are not reviewed sufficiently frequently or effectively. For example, spirituality was last discussed collectively two years ago and has been overlooked in the school prospectus. Monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is also insufficient. The school's

one foundation governor is very new to this role. He is able and astute and appears to have a very good understanding of this position. Although his time is currently limited he has attended several Acts of Collective Worship and, along with the Head Teacher, has initiated a valuable questionnaire to parents about aspects of the school's Church foundation. Responses from these indicate that parents are generally happy and recognise the school's many strengths.

SIAS report March 2006 Ruishton Church of England Primary School Newlands Road  
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