

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Benedict's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Benedict Street
Glastonbury
Somerset
BA6 9EX

Diocese of Bath and Wells

Somerset LEA

SIAS inspection: 16th November 2005

Previous S23 inspection: December 2000

URN: 123833

Headteacher: Mr Chris Lewis

SIAS Inspector NS#119: Rev. John Angle

Context

This is a ten class junior school with 288 pupils, aged 7-11 on role, in the heart of the town of Glastonbury. Children come from a variety of backgrounds. There is a high proportion of children with special needs. There have been considerable changes and improvements in the school in the last three years.

Summary Judgement

This is a good Church School. The school has made excellent progress to improve standards both in learning and in behaviour in the last three years. This has laid a strong foundation on which to continue to develop its Christian ethos which is beginning to give the school a distinctively Christian character. In an inclusive, supportive and caring atmosphere Christian values and spiritual awareness is strongly encouraged and developed in close partnership with the church and local community.

Established strengths

- The ethos of the school is one of inclusiveness, openness and integrity resulting in a strong empathy, awareness, care and support for all pupils and especially those with special needs.
- The school's ability to "unlock the potential of everyone" is a strength of the school.
- The moral and social development of the pupils is a strong feature of the school.
- There is enthusiastic and encouraging leadership firmly based on Christian principles and effective management processes where everyone involved in the life of the school, pupils, staff, governors, the local clergy and parents work together as a team.

Focus for development

- Include a clear statement of intent and a detailed action plan for developing the Christian foundation of the school in the School Improvement Plan
- Indicate more obviously through signs (in and outside the school), symbols and displays the towns strong Christian heritage and the school's distinctive Christian and Anglican foundation
- Review and update policy statements in Collective Worship; Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education giving special attention to how and where these subjects are delivered in the day to day life of the school and the INSET required to support staff

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

The school makes good provision to meet the needs of all learners seeking as the school mission statement indicates - "to unlock the potential of all pupils". There is an inclusive and positive ethos. Pupils are happy, confident and feel valued, safe and secure. Teachers are excellent role models and care for their pupils. This encourages pupils to talk together and relate to each other with the same vulnerability, integrity, care and honesty they see in the staff. Teaching assistants, a family advice liaison worker, traveller support, extended day activities with increasing parental, clergy and community involvement ensure all children, particularly those with special needs, get the support they need and deserve. Pupils are constantly encouraged to make the right choice, so encouraging self-reliance, self-discipline and good relationships and behaviour. Children respond well to positive behaviour reinforcement. Celebration boards, "Today's Star" (with digital photograph!) golden time awards, celebration praise and a half termly head's tea party are all examples of the distinctive Christian values of the school which encourages and supports pupils. These and other activities encourage the spiritual, moral and social development of the children. The distinctive Christian character of the school is seen in the considerable progress made in recent years in standards of attainment, in the developing quality of the learning environment and in the improvement in behaviour of the children.

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

Worship is a key element in the life of the school. Acts of worship are good and strongly support a sense of community. They make a good contribution to the spiritual, moral and social development of the children and the Christian ethos of the school. There is a detailed Collective Worship Policy which incorporates helpful practical planning and delivery ideas. Pupils willingly and thoughtfully participate in acts of collective worship which is delivered in a variety of ways. Themes, sensitively selected, reflect the real life choices pupils of all faiths and none have to make and reinforces the school ethos and values deriving from its Christian foundation. Pupils are given time for reflection and prayer. Pupils understanding of Anglican faith and practise is developed through close links with local clergy who come into school regularly, and on special occasions and at Christian festivals through attendance at church. The school is beginning to use more Christian symbols, colours, banners and displays together with Anglican liturgy to help create the "sacred space" for worship in the school. Outstanding class, whole school and church worship will develop as further attention is given to focussed INSET and more systematic monitoring and evaluative procedures involving the whole school community and especially the pupils and their parents.

How effective is the Religious Education in the school?

R.E. is recognised as an important subject in the school. The standard of work and attainment of the children is good. Pupils have a positive attitude towards the subject and work with obvious interest and enjoyment. They have a good understanding and also respect for different religions and cultures. Learning and teaching is good and lessons are delivered with commitment and enthusiasm. Lessons are very well planned with clear learning objectives and there is good evidence of progression, differentiation and extension activities. There is a consistency of content across year groups. Staff have the ability through skilled questioning to get to the heart of issues which contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. Links are made with other curricular areas and with collective worship. Some displays in class and around the school enhance the status of religious education which in turn highlights the Christian foundation and ethos of the school. Valuable support is given from the Diocesan Education Department. The R.E. policy needs updating with a greater focus now on subject assessment, monitoring and evaluation.

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

The quality of leadership is good and the firm commitment of the Head to developing the Christian ethos of the school and links with the church – both as building and people - contributes significantly to the growing success of the school. The Head gives strong and encouraging leadership working with all members of the school community in effective teams. The image of the school has greatly improved in the last three years. The Primary Leadership Team well supported by an active, able and involved governing body work together to manage the school effectively and to achieve the agreed aspirations and purposes of a church school. All members of the school work hard to respond to pupils needs and to promote equality of opportunity. The Head is always “around the school” and there is an “open door policy” based on mutual respect between parents and staff. All members of the school community are involved and are valued. The school council too are an articulate, active group of pupils who take their responsibilities seriously. They too contribute together with an active parents and teachers association to the success of the school.

SIAS NOVEMBER 2005 St Benedict's CE VA Primary School, Somerset, BA6 9EX