

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Ursula Taylor Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School

High Street

Clapham

Bedford

MK41 6EG

Diocese of St Albans

LEA: Bedfordshire

SIAS Inspection :1st. Feb 2006

Previous S23 Inspection:

URN:109597

Headteacher: Marjorie Carline

SIAS Inspector : Alan Thornsby NS 137

Context

Ursula Taylor Lower School is an average sized school having a reception class and seven mixed age classes. The school serves the village of Clapham, on the outskirts of Bedford. The school is very well maintained and has good facilities, including a swimming pool and environmental area. The headteacher has been in post for eleven years, although many members of the governing body were appointed in September 2005.

Summary Judgement

Ursula Taylor Lower School is a distinctive church school that provides its pupils with a safe and secure learning environment in which they have pride, are given responsibility and an understanding of the importance of respect and worth.

Established strengths

- The commitment and role model of the headteacher.
- The very caring and supportive learning environment.
- The mutually beneficial links with the local church.

Focus for development

- To review the schools mission statement and aims to ensure that the school is explicit in its Christian aims and vision.
- To develop a cycle of monitoring and evaluation for Collective worship.

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

The school is good in meeting the needs of all learners through its distinctive Christian character. (Grade 2)

The welcoming atmosphere of the school, including that given by all members of the community to visitors is obvious and reassuring. The Code of Conduct and Charter of Rights as well as class rules are displayed in each classroom. This well established safe, secure and supportive learning environment ensures that all pupils are valued for both academic and other achievements. This is acknowledged verbally, by the use of merit points and stickers and the Golden book assembly. Thus all pupils become self-confident and articulate and know that they are treated fairly. Problems and misunderstandings are thoroughly and openly discussed, and the individuals given the opportunities to understand others points of view. Pupils are given responsibility as playground friends.

The values of care and respect, forgiveness and reconciliation are central to the school. They are also the foundation for relationships between all members of the school community. In addition to being demonstrated by adults these values are reinforced for the pupils by displays of work around the building relating to anti bullying and caring for the school environment. Thus the relationships between all members of the school community are very good and everyone is aware of the care mutual respect and support in times of difficulty. The Christian foundations for these values, however is not fully explained or communicated.

There are good development opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural in both worship and curriculum areas. For example pupils and parents from other faiths are able to share their beliefs and practices in lessons and displays, such as the present Chinese New Year Display. Reflective questions within displays of work, and the use of the schools environmental area provide further opportunities for spiritual development.

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

The worshipping experience provided by the school is good. (Grade 2)

Worship is a central feature of the school which provides a daily act of whole school worship. A range of people, including the vicar and the Open the Book group lead worship every week.

Worship themes are coordinated by the headteacher following diocesan guidelines. Pupils are

aware of the special atmosphere of worship. They enter the hall quietly to music, which on the day of inspection was Chinese music in recognition of Chinese New Year. They listen attentively, willingly join in role-play and sing enthusiastically but with reverence. They respond well to the opportunities to reflect and consider their place in the world and that of other people. It is also a time to learn about how to deal with problems and to share joy or sorrow. This contributes to their spiritual development. The themes in worship are presented as Christian viewpoints and pupils are invited to participate at whatever level they feel comfortable. This gives the pupils of other faiths and none the opportunity to actively engage with worship.

The themes for whole school worship are not the same as those explored in any depth in the classroom. This is an example of how a system on evaluation and monitoring might help the school to improve further.

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. (Grade 2)

The headteacher provides an excellent role model in displaying Christian values in her everyday life about school, which is mirrored by the adults in school. Thus the school is highly regarded by parents and the wider community as a very caring and successful school.

Unfortunately the Christian foundation for this well established practice is not made explicit in either school documentation or displays in school. The school is accurate in its use of self-evaluation as a church school.

The school has very strong links with the local parish church, the vicar and other members of the congregation who regularly lead worship. The vicar is the accompanist for the school choir and is a parent. Thus his regular presence in school means that he can fulfil a chaplaincy role when needed. The school uses the church as a curriculum resource, and for some calendar services.

The choir sings at special church services. The links between school and church have been mutually beneficial in developing a joint community through the involvement of the vicar in school.

The school is also active in other local events, such as the village fair and distributes harvest gifts to both the local community and homeless charities. These help the pupils to be aware of the needs of others and how they as pupils can help to meet them.

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