

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Abbas and Templecombe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane,
Templecombe
BA8 0HP

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 6th December 2006

Date of last inspection: November 2002

School's unique reference number: 123775

Headteacher: Mrs Bernie Green

Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Abbas and Templecombe is a Church of England primary school with 112 children which serves the village and surrounding area. Children come from a mixed socio- economic background. Children are arranged into 4.5 classes of which some are mixed age. The number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Abbas and Templecombe as a Church of England school are good with some outstanding features.

The school is a place where children feel the presence of God and where they are encouraged to use prayer to develop a spiritual dimension to their lives.

Established strengths

- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on Christian values of love and care
- All children are given the opportunity to thrive in their learning and personal development
- The quality of leadership is very high and has a direct impact on the Christian character of the school

Focus for development

- Provide more intimate classroom opportunities for children to discuss issues in greater depth following collective worship
- Introduce systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards in Religious Education
- Develop reciprocal links between the school and church communities

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in the way it meets the needs of all learners

The quality of relationships at Abbas & Templecombe is exceptional. All members of the school community treat each other with a profound respect. It is overtly clear that this stems from Christian values and from the love that God shows for His children. This is demonstrated throughout the school in the special relationships between children and adults and the highly thoughtful manner in which children care for each other. For example, on numerous occasions older children were seen to look after younger ones quite naturally. Younger children accept this support and are greatly comforted by it. It creates a community in which all feel safe and valued. The children know this and respond by saying that they wish to give something back to the school in return. This they do by displaying very positive attitudes in their learning and by responding extremely well to the high expectations which form an integral part of the school ethos. This excellent motivation was seen particularly in RE lessons where children were given many opportunities to discuss their feelings and

emotions. The children have a keen awareness of the presence of God and talk about their beliefs with comfortable ease. Opportunities exist in lessons for prayer and for reflection on spiritual matters. The children possess the confidence to express their views and have the vocabulary through which they can articulate complex issues, creating a learning environment which is exciting and enjoyable. The standards produced are high and children rise to the ambitious content of the lessons that are presented to them. The school is committed to looking beyond its immediate environment and children have a good awareness of the world around them. There are moments of exhilaration. For example, some of the youngest children gave gifts of kisses and acts of kindness to God and tied them to a balloon which was then released with a prayer into the sky. It was a magical moment which captured the children's sense of awe.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is well planned and follows themes that have a predominantly Christian emphasis but which also include opportunities to explore moral issues and topical concerns. This makes worship relevant to the lives of the children and helps to give them a positive attitude. The children enjoy discussing issues and asking questions as it increases their sense of involvement. Concerns are sometimes raised in whole school worship and are explored more deeply in the intimacy of the classroom group. The school recognises that this could be developed and become a dynamic way of increasing the children's spiritual dimension. Prayer is an established part of worship and is also taken into the classroom. Children have an active involvement in prayer. They understand that it is a way of talking to God and that He will listen to them. Prayers are sometimes written and read by children, which follow an established Anglican pattern. The Incumbent creates links with the church community by using responses familiar to both school and parish. He leads the Lord's Prayer when he takes worship and most children are familiar enough to say it by heart. When a candle is lit during worship it provides a focus for stillness and reflection. Older children in particular say that they like this opportunity to 'be at one with their thoughts'. The impact of worship has spread throughout the school as children and adults alike are seen to be living their lives according to the Christian message.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is good with some outstanding features

Governors are committed to developing the Christian character of the school. They are able to articulate a vision in which the Christian message is central. The governing body is actively involved in the life of the school and is keen to see even stronger links with the church community. The Incumbent has been recently appointed but is already beginning to make an impact on the life of the school. He is known to the children and they already refer to him with affection. He recognises that opportunities exist to strengthen links between church and school and is eager to develop them. He is particularly concerned that the children have the ability to see beyond the self and develop a spirituality that creates a sense of otherness. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and feel that it is a special place in which children are allowed to develop as rounded individuals. The school recognises their need to improve the assessment of RE. The Headteacher leads her staff as an exemplary role model. She leads the whole community by her commitment to its Christian status and by demanding the highest academic and personal standards from all those involved in the school.