

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Albury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church End,
Albury,
Nr Ware,
Hertfordshire,
SG11 2JQ

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire

SIAS Inspection: 24 September 2007

Previous S23 Inspection: 25 and 26 February 2002

URN: 117419

Headteacher: Ann Atherton

SIAS Inspector Name: Bob Hopcraft

SIAS Inspector No: 484

School Context

Albury is a much smaller than average primary school. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, some coming from the village itself while others travel from the surrounding area. The buildings are mostly traditional and all are extremely well maintained, providing a bright and well cared-for environment for learning. The school benefits from very attractive grounds and a physical link with the church in the form of a gateway and a path, which means that the church building can be used regularly as a resource for learning.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Albury CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Albury is a good Church school that promotes its Christian character effectively and has outstanding links with the local Church. Relationships are good at all levels and Christian values firmly underpin the school's work. Pupils are encouraged to develop open, independent and questioning minds within a safe and secure environment and are generally confident and thoughtful learners.

Established strengths

- The clear promotion of Christian values in all that the school does;
- The clear vision of the head, staff and governors for the promotion of the school's Christian character;
- The teamwork and good quality relationships at all levels;
- The outstanding links with the local Church and clergy, which impact well on the spiritual and social life of the school.

Focus for development

- Develop ways to evaluate formally the quality and impact of collective worship;
- Develop clear assessment procedures, to ensure that all pupils are challenged to attain their best in religious education;
- Build on the strong start that has been made in evaluating the school as a Church school, involving all stakeholders, so that it becomes embedded in practice.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

This is because all pupils feel valued and special. There is a strong emphasis on relationships and teamwork at all levels and these impact positively on the personal development of all learners. Pupils demonstrate confidence and high levels of self-esteem and are actively encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school. An example of this is the *Albury Heroes* initiative, which encourages older pupils to care for their younger counterparts in the school playground. Christian values underpin all that the school does and this is evident in the school environment as well as its atmosphere, moving one parent to write “... *our child is visibly developing a caring, sharing, confident and respectful attitude*”. Moral values are promoted particularly well and the developing programme of values education, rooted in the SEAL materials, contributes well to moral, social, spiritual and cultural education. This enables pupils to relate positively to the beliefs and feelings of others. Evidence of its Christian foundation is clearly visible throughout the school and the school uses published materials well, notably the school brochure, to promote its history as well as its Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is central to the life of the school and as a result, pupils make positive gains in their spiritual development. Pupils enjoy worship, which is conducted in an atmosphere of calm and respect. Acts of worship are planned, based on use of the SEAL (*Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning*) materials and the Diocesan collective worship document. Silence and reflection are used effectively as part of worship and thoughtful use is made of prayer throughout the school day, with pupils involved in writing their own collections of prayers. The programme of values education is fully integrated within worship and pupils are encouraged to reflect on the feelings and values of others. Local clergy play an important role in worship and good use is made of the church of St Mary the Virgin for worship at key times of the term and year. At present the school does not formally evaluate the quality and impact of collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Many learners attain the expected levels in religious education and make progress. Most pupils enjoy religious education and have a good understanding of the Christian faith, appropriate to their age and experience. They can talk about Bible stories they have studied and know about the festivals and symbols of other major world religions. Opportunities are taken to explore the Anglican tradition and good use is made of the local church as a learning resource. However, pupils are not always challenged to think deeply enough about what their studies mean for them and how their message can impact on their own lives. Where this does happen, progress is swift and pupils are able to discuss more complex ideas lucidly and thoughtfully. Currently, the school does not have clear assessment procedures within religious education and has rightly identified this as an area for development, so that pupils can be challenged to attain the highest possible standards.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good

This is because the head, staff and governors have established a clear vision for the school's development as a Christian foundation and the promotion of its Christian character. Staff have taken part in professional development on what it means to be a church school and this has had a positive impact. Foundation governors play an active role within the school. Developments in both religious education and collective worship form part of the school's development plan and a useful start has been made in evaluating the school's effectiveness as a Church school and in identifying areas for future development, which has involved all staff and governors. This practice is still relatively new and is not yet embedded in the school's self-evaluation procedures. Staff and pupils feel valued and are involved in the promotion of the school's vision, and parents and other stakeholders speak highly of the school and its promotion of a family atmosphere. The outstanding links with the local clergy and parish have a very positive impact on the development of all who work within the school

and every opportunity is taken to generate and maintain links with the local community.

SIAS report September 2007 Albury CofE VA Primary School, Nr Ware, Herts SG11 2JQ