

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Norreys Avenue

Wokingham

RG40 1UX

#### Diocese of Oxford

Local Authority: Wokingham

Date of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009

Date of last inspection: Not applicable

School's Unique reference number: 135459

Name of Headteacher: Mrs Tina Norman

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Gillian Allison NS 142

#### Context

This new school opened in September 2008, following the amalgamation of a community infant school and a Church of England aided junior school. It occupies separate but adjacent buildings of these schools. There is an integrated resource unit for pupils with physical disabilities. Pupils in this average-size primary school come from a broad range of social and economic backgrounds.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints Church of England Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.**

The church school ethos is strengthening as staff and governors work to embed the vision. Their understanding and commitment provide considerable capacity for realising that vision. The growing relationship with the local church enriches the life of the school.

#### Established strengths

- The headteacher's leadership in exploring how Christian values support the school's aims
- The inclusive school ethos which welcomes and supports all learners
- The good links with the local church which contribute to children's spiritual development

#### Focus for development

- To ensure the self-evaluation cycle includes church school distinctiveness
- To embed observation of religious education to develop consistent standards

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

The strength of the school is the way it nurtures the children. Parents are attracted to the care given to every child and many associate this with the church school ethos. The quality of care is rooted in Christian values which emphasise the specialness of every individual. Worship is a time when these values are explored and they are followed up across the curriculum. Inclusion is fundamental, reflected in the integration of children with physical disabilities into mainstream schooling. It is manifest in the broad range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities which match children's own interests. These include drama workshops run by local clergy. The emphasis on the whole child means that personal development is good. Celebration assemblies, which are popular with children and families, highlight all forms of success and promote shared values. Relationships are good, modelled by staff who work as a supportive team. This is particularly impressive in a new school. The calm atmosphere promotes respect for others and creates an expectation of good behaviour. When mistakes are made, there is forgiveness and support for a fresh start. Opportunities for reflection are an effective part of school routine, offering stillness and thinking time for children and adults. Children know through collective worship, the regular presence of clergy and proximity of the church that faith is part of everyday life. Symbols and displays, many of which have special resonance for members of the community, help children's growing understanding of the church school character. Children show compassion for others in many charitable enterprises and in their prayers. They are gaining an understanding of Christian communities in the wider world through partnerships in an Indian diocese.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

The school judges that most children are positive about worship, a view confirmed in conversation with a group of pupils. They highlight the importance of being together; staff and all children, irrespective of age or ability, indicating that collective worship plays a key role in promoting the inclusive community. The focus on inclusivity also means that worship springs from the Christian tradition yet is designed to be accessible to those of all faith positions. Consequently, children talk freely about faith and link their own experiences to worship topics. They enjoy the Rector's involvement in worship. The coordinators, with clergy support, promote worship with colleagues and use training to good effect, especially in the application of reflection time. Worship makes a good contribution to spiritual and moral development. Careful planning incorporates Biblical stories with SEAL( Social and emotional aspects of learning) themes, highlighting Christian values which underpin the school's moral code. There is time for reflection and prayer, which is often contributed by children. Pupils answer questions with increased confidence and enjoy active participation. In one act of worship, for example, a good number of children reacted with spontaneous enthusiasm to images about The Great Commandment. The worship programme is enhanced by special celebrations and regular worship in the parish church, which attract growing numbers of parents and strengthen the sense of community. Children value the specialness of these occasions which extend understanding of Anglican tradition and help bring everyday experience to their religious education. Worship is reviewed in the light of staff feedback. However, there is a need to consult more widely to ensure that best practice is sustained and developed.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

The school's commitment to religious education is seen in positive prospectus statements, lively displays and the allocation of resources. Importantly, the coordinator is part of the senior management team. Pupils see the relevance of religious education because it is often delivered as part of cross-curricular topic learning. The coordinator is an enthusiastic leader in this, supporting staff to incorporate the scheme of work in topic planning. Monitoring of planning ensures that the syllabus is delivered. Spiritual and moral development is good in RE. Reflection time is used increasingly to give all pupils an opportunity to think and speak. Through RE children acquire skills of tolerance and respect for all faith positions. They learn about biblical teachings upon which the school's moral code is based. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. Staff now use level descriptors to give lessons a clear, relevant purpose. Key questions are posed to stimulate pupils' thinking and pupils make good progress when appropriate explanations are given to guide that thinking. Children's attainment is satisfactory, in line with core subjects. Some children observed make good progress. However, the new school assessment system is only recently in place, so judgements across key stages are hard to make. The coordinator aims to make regular lesson observations. These will identify best practice and support consistent development of RE. Pupils' understanding of Christianity is good. They make connections with experiences in collective worship and church services, as when Key Stage 1 children name different festivals associated with lighted candles. Clergy visits reinforce the reality of religious leadership in daily life. Through their study of world faiths children meet representatives from the local community and begin to explore how belief affects lives.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is satisfactory**

The vision statement grew from an understanding of how Christian values could be realised in the work of the new school. Staff and governors worked on this together, so there is a community of ownership which benefits the development of the school. The headteacher communicates well so that newcomers understand what it means to be part of this church school. This is one aspect of the many efforts the school makes to forge effective partnerships with parents. Another is the recent appointment, with the backing of school, parish and diocese, of a family support worker. Good and strengthening links with the parish church exemplify church school distinctiveness. Clergy and congregation contribute prayers and strong commitment to governance and school programmes. The local Church Schools Group gives valued support, particularly for the leadership. The involvement of other church and faith groups underlines the inclusive community ethos of the school. Ongoing support and guidance from the diocese benefits the development of the church school. Foundation governors translate their commitment into active, understanding support. However, their role in monitoring collective worship and RE is underdeveloped. The

school rightly identifies that self-evaluation of the church school is a priority, so that governors can assess how well the initial vision is being realised and what is needed to take the school forward.

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