

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Ann Cam Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bayfield Gardens

Dymock

GL18 2BH

Diocese of Gloucester

Gloucestershire LEA

Date of inspection 9th November 2006

Date of last inspection 29th May 2002

School's URN 115683

Name of Headteacher Mrs Hilary Orme

Inspector Mrs Carole May, NS 113

Context

This modern school has an attractive rural location. It is smaller than average and serves four parishes in The Forest of Dean. The intake is drawn mainly from Dymock and Kempley, but some pupils come from relatively isolated villages. Nearly all pupils are white British. There are 106 pupils on roll. They are taught in four classes each containing two year groups.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ann Cam Primary as Church of England School is outstanding.

This impressive school successfully fulfils its mission statement and Christian values permeate every aspect of its work. All members of the school community follow a code of behaviour based on mutual respect. They unite to provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment where pupils are helped to grow in self confidence, self esteem and spiritual awareness.

Established Strengths

- The leadership and management of the school. Successful team work of the headteacher and governing body creates an ethos of mutual support and openness involving the whole school community in a process of continuous self-evaluation and improvement.
- Enthusiastic and skilled teachers supported by able assistants make learning fun.
- The excellent personal development and care the school provides leads to highly motivated, thoughtful and responsive pupils.
- The exceptional level of support given by the parents and the local community helps the school to further its Christian aims and provides additional resources and support for the pupils.

There is no major focus for development

- However, the evaluation of the daily act of collective worship would be improved by the systematic involvement of pupils.

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

The academic needs of pupils of all abilities are provided for very well, and their personal care and development is excellent. In addition to a lively, well planned curriculum and very effective staff at all levels, a very wide circle of other adults combine their skills and talents to the benefit of the pupils. This starts even before the pupils begin their statutory education as the privately run pre-school group on the site works very closely with the school to plan their curriculum and join in school activities so that very firm foundations are laid from the outset. Links with other educational establishments and education, health and social services professionals are also excellent.

Parents and families are extremely supportive in a wide variety of ways, not least by providing their own children with the help and encouragement they need to succeed, but also through the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association who have made a commitment to run and maintain the school's swimming pool. In addition to providing the finance, parents have been trained to see to the day to day maintenance and to act as life guards during swimming lessons. They also provide a range of other equipment to supplement the schools resources such as the purchase of a dozen laptop computers. Another group of supporters maintain the school's nature reserve, the church organist teaches piano lessons, and the football club is coached by someone from a local team. The vicar comes each week to run a lunch time club to help with pupils' social, moral and spiritual development. A wide variety of other clubs are provided to develop pupils' interests and social skills such as French, art, dance and gardening depending upon the season.

The pupils too help to ensure the school runs smoothly by taking on a range of roles and responsibilities, In addition to the effective School Council, there are prefects as well as playtime and reading 'buddies'. Pupils are taught to look after one another and to care for the school environment. They also understand that there are people less fortunate than themselves and frequently raise money or embark upon projects that help others. They are encouraged to take an interest in world affairs, and lessons often provide opportunities to discuss moral issues. Social and moral issues are addressed regularly and opportunities are provided across the curriculum to help pupils' spiritual development. The result of all this is that pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy in every respect and their personal, social and emotional development is outstanding.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Collective worship has an appropriately high status within the school. It provides the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs, to participate and respond and to develop a sense of community. Pupils experience a wide diversity of worship practice, which encourages a variety of responses. Christian festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter are celebrated in the local parish church. Parents, governors and members of the local community share in these services. Every week a team of adult members from local churches lead worship, which takes the form of drama illustrating various stories from the Bible. Once a week, worship is lead by a local priest who also runs a lunchtime club for pupils. Preparation classes for Communion are also held in the school. The parish church runs a 'Fun Club' once a month, which, as a result of the close working relationship between the school and the church, a great many pupils attend.

Planning for worship in school is thorough and the topics are well suited to the needs and ages of the pupils. They are given the opportunity to consider familiar ideas and to explore new ones. Christian symbols are used appropriately. In addition to the cross, Bible and lighted candle, there were also fresh flowers and the backdrop of the table was dressed attractively to illustrate the theme being considered. The act of worship observed used the story of Abraham to help promote the theme of peace. The hymn and the prayers used were all carefully chosen to fit the topic. The music used when pupils entered and left the hall was quiet and restful. Older pupils set up the hall and took an active part in the worship. ICT equipment was used effectively to help keep the attention of pupils of all ages and the length of the service was appropriate. As a result, behaviour was excellent.

The headteacher, in her role as worship co-ordinator, regularly monitors the quality of the daily act of collective worship and writes evaluative comments. These are used to help when planning future acts of worship. However, at present, pupils' views are not systematically sought.

The effectiveness of religious education is outstanding.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve at least as well as in other subjects of the curriculum. At the end of Year 2 standards are appropriate for the age of the pupils, and, by the end of Year 6, standards are above the level expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching is excellent, work is well matched to the needs of the pupils and lessons are fun. Interesting and relevant homework is set. In each classroom there is a display of pupils' work, non-fiction books, and relevant artefacts to support and enhance teaching and learning. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic for the subject and understand the relevance of religious education to modern day life.

Two lessons about the Jewish religion were observed and both were outstanding. They were pitched at exactly the right level to help move pupils' learning forward. Teachers asked challenging questions that made pupils think hard. They used a variety of different teaching styles and pupils were given interesting activities. Opportunities were provided for pupils to work co-operatively and to discuss their ideas with one another. Good links were made with other subjects of the curriculum and pupils were helped to relate what they were learning to life in the world today.

The leadership of the subject is excellent. The curriculum is carefully thought out. Resources are good and supplemented appropriately by loans from the Diocesan Resource Centre. Both staff and governors have been trained in the use of the new Agreed Syllabus for RE and the school is already using the new, recommended form of assessing pupils' progress.

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

The dedication and commitment of the headteacher and governing body ensure that the school's Christian foundation is at the heart of the daily life of the school. They engage the whole school community in continuous improvement. Their skill in this has been recognised and as a result, the school has received the 'Investors in People' quality standard award. This striving for excellence has also resulted in other awards such as The Healthy School Quality Mark and The Arts Mark. However, the most significant evidence of success lies in the welcoming, happy, harmonious atmosphere exuded, the affirmation from staff and pupils that they enjoy coming to work and to learn, and the high regard in which the school is held by everyone.

SIAS report November 2006 Ann Cam Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
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