

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Ash Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street,
Ash,
Martock
TA12 6NS

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 6 December 2006

Date of last inspection: October 2001

School's unique reference number: 123814

Headteacher: Mr Adam Hawkins

Inspector's name and number: Janet Bond 247

School context

Ash Church School is a rural primary school with 150 pupils. Although it serves the local village, through parental choice most pupils come from outside the catchment area. Most pupils are of white British background. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number with learning difficulties.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ash Church Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Christian values and the caring and stimulating Christian ethos underpin all aspects of school life. All individuals are valued and all are exceptionally well nurtured to achieve very high standards and to have a respect for themselves, for others and for the environment.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos where all flourish
- The Christian values that underpin the rich and diverse curriculum
- The excellent relationships that support each child

Focus for development

- Establish strategies for assessing pupils' progress in religious education
- Involve pupils in monitoring the impact of collective worship on the school community

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

The Christian values implicit in all areas of school life are reflected in the pupils' enthusiastic attitude to learning and in their care and concern for others. The rich and diverse curriculum offered, coupled with very good teaching, enables all pupils to achieve exceptionally high standards. Outstanding relationships and the creative and stimulating school environment contribute significantly to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Lessons in religious education very effectively support this growth. Challenging and very well planned lessons, using a wide range of appropriate resources, help pupils develop a good understanding of their own and other faiths. Pupils are actively involved in their learning and their responses show an excellent insight into complex questions. Pupils are proud of their school and of their academic, sporting and artistic successes. Pupils are self confident because they benefit from the many opportunities provided for them to take responsibility, such as the "buddy" system and school council. In stimulating lessons pupils show a generosity of spirit when working cooperatively, either in pairs or in groups. Pupils' involvement with the natural world, for example through working in the school garden and using the school nature trail, supports their care and concern for the environment and their appreciation of the wonders of nature. Pupils practise understanding and care through the very wide range of highly successful fundraising activities they work hard to support. The

Christian ethos of inclusivity and care makes the school a welcoming environment for all. As one pupil said, "I love school."

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Themes are well planned to introduce and reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian teaching and values. As a result of relevant themes and stimulating delivery, pupils show a high level of participation, such as Bible reading, leading prayers and enjoyment in worship. While pupils show an enjoyment in, and understanding of worship, they are not involved in monitoring its impact on their daily life. The school has very good links with the local parish church and clergy, together with clergy and visitors from other Christian denominations who regularly lead worship in school. This introduces pupils to a wide range of traditions and provides pupils with a very good understanding and experience of Anglican practice. Pupils' spiritual growth is successfully enhanced through the creative arts, particularly music. The school orchestra frequently leads the very good hymn singing and pupils take pleasure and pride in this. Prayers are familiar, with all joining in, and pupils understand and use the opportunities provided for quiet reflection. Pupils speak enthusiastically about worship and use their developing Christian vocabulary naturally in discussions.

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

As a result of outstanding leadership and management, all within Ash Church School share the Christian vision which permeates all aspects of school life. This vision is at the heart of all policies, documents and practice and is shared by all within the school community. Exciting and innovative work on analysis of spirituality in all curriculum subjects is one example of the school constantly evaluating and striving to improve. All staff are committed to Ash Church

School being a child centred school where all feel nurtured and valued. The caring Christian ethos of the school and the development of the whole child are greatly appreciated by parents and the wider community, all of whom are actively involved in school life. Personal and academic achievements are high and are joyously celebrated. The headteacher, staff, pupils, governors, parents and local clergy are fully committed to, and play an active role in, creating an excellent church school. Religious education is very well managed, led and resourced. Planning is very good and pupils clearly make very good progress even though assessment in religious education is in the early stages of development. This is a dynamic school where all strive for, and contribute to, its continuing successes. This has resulted in a school with a vibrant and caring Christian ethos, encouraging and enabling all to flourish.