

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Austrey Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

St. Nicholas Close
Austrey
Atherstone
CV9 3EQ

Diocese: Birmingham

Local authority: Warwickshire
Dates of inspection: 25th February 2008
Date of last inspection: October 2003
School's unique reference number: 125624
Headteacher: Ann Parsons
Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby 137

School context

The school serves the village of Austrey and the surrounding area. Most pupils are from a White British background. Few are entitled to free school meals and the numbers of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Austrey School as a Church of England school are good

The commitment to the personal and academic development of all pupils in the school gives pupils practical experience of the love and care of a Christian community. This results in all pupils being valued and respected as individuals, enabling them to be confident and mature in their daily lives.

Established strengths

- The vision and leadership of the head.
- The quality of the relationships between members of the school community.
- The recognition and pursuit of the academic and personal potential of each individual in school

Focus for development

- To fully explore as a governing body what it means to be a church school and to develop their involvement in monitoring and evaluation
- To explore opportunities to reinforce and challenge pupils' awareness of Christian values

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

'Here we are one big family where children learn what it means to be Christian' sums up the excellent relationships between all members of this school community. The result is a family ethos where care for each other is paramount. The ethos of the school is one in which provision is not confined to academic opportunities and so 'everyone in school is able to excel at something'. Although adults in school are role models for in their daily routines, so are older pupils. There is an extremely effective buddy system eagerly anticipated and organised by Year Six pupils. This allows them to take responsibility for the welfare of reception children in the playground and walking to church as well as sharing a weekly reading time. Pupils are highly confident in articulating the social and emotional needs of younger children as well as the acknowledging the achievements of each other. They show real understanding of how younger children have shorter concentration spans and support

them with great tact and sensitivity. Pupils' spiritual development is good and well supported by work in all curriculum subjects. Visitors from other cultures support their cultural development by the creation of art work that as one pupil explained 'we have faith we can show through music and art.' Pupils understand that Christian values 'teach us how to behave and forgive', and explain that they know making mistakes involves forgiveness and saying sorry. However, although displays reflect a church school with links to respect and behaviour through work on anti bullying, there is little evidence of the reinforcement of other values such as responsibility or justice to challenge pupils' thinking.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Saying thank you to God is central to all celebration in school. Worship themes are well planned and have an immediate impact on the lives of pupils because of the links with other curriculum areas particularly personal and social education. Worship is organised to meet the needs of different age groups. Staff monitor and evaluate acts of worship and this informs future planning, however there is no direct involvement of governors, parents or pupils in this process. Pupils create a reverent atmosphere and clearly enjoy singing, which is reflected in displays relating to their favourite songs. They enjoy opportunities to contribute to worship through sharing prayer, drama or their music skills. There is good support from the vicar and church members who often lead worship and action songs to give another dimension to worship. Pupils enjoy prayer as a time to talk to God, and describe the value of worship as 'a time to learn about God'. They understand that worship informs their lives and conduct and confidently explain that 'stories about Jesus help us to understand about morals and respect for other people.' Pupils are very aware that in this school there is respect for the beliefs of everyone. As a pupil said 'there is respect for other people in prayer time, even if they do not believe in God and just reflect on what has been said.' The use of the church for festival services, when members of the village are invited to attend, gives pupils a sense of belonging to a wider worshipping community.

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

The head leads by example and has a clear vision for this school that is realised in the personal development and attitudes of pupils. There is a deeply rooted commitment to 'God's love for all' that is reflected in the teamwork and role models of the staff. The governing body are supportive of the Christian ethos of the school and the need to have Religious Education as a priority in the school development plan. However they have yet to fully address the wider reaching impact of the implications of church school distinctiveness and do not play a direct role in monitoring and evaluation. There are effective and positive channels of communication with parents, who support the school in a formal way through Friends of Austrey Church of England School. This group is also a link between the school and village community with whom they join for events. The vicar provides effective pastoral support for the school as well as being used to support the teaching RE. The regular meetings of the Soul Café and Good Friday workshops bring the church into the school and provide pupils with fun and informal ways of developing their faith.