

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Avonmouth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Catherine Street,  
Avonmouth,  
Bristol  
BS11 9LG

**Diocese: Bristol**

LA: Bristol

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006

Date of last inspection: September 2001

School's Unique reference number: 109140

Name of Headteacher: Mr. Ralph Dolling

Inspector's name: Mrs. Joyce Bellamy

National Society inspector's number: 112

#### **School Context**

Avonmouth V.C. Primary School caters for the needs of pupils mostly from the dockside village of Avonmouth itself, which is situated on the western outskirts of Bristol, adjacent to the Port of Bristol and the Severnside Industrial Estate. This is a well defined urban community with an equal mix of rented and private housing.

#### **Summary Judgement**

Avonmouth V.C. Primary is an example of a good Church school with some outstanding features. Christian values and beliefs underpin all the work undertaken in the school to foster and develop each pupil's full potential.

#### **Established strengths**

- The enthusiasm and commitment of whole school staff based on implicit Christian values
- The high standard of pastoral care for all its pupils

#### **Focus for development**

- Make more explicit the Christian values of the school by fully implementing the Values for Life Programme in conjunction with the existing SEAL project themes in Worship.
- Produce simple systems to more formally and effectively monitor the impact of worship and Religious Education.

#### **Avonmouth V.C. is outstanding in meeting the needs of all its learners through its distinctive, implicit Christian character.**

All learners are welcomed into this caring school. It provides a safe secure environment where everyone is valued as an individual and every success however small, is celebrated. Within a Christian context, all staff place a high value on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and provide good personal examples complemented by a wide range of appropriate activities during the school day and also out of hours. Spiritual growth is fostered through worship, Religious Education, SMSC and across the wider curriculum. Learners are encouraged to be independent and take responsibilities within the school; e.g. the use of peer mentors is very effective. Pupils know that school is a place where they are accepted "just as they are" with all their frailties and difficulties in the sure knowledge that there will be someone there who will listen and understand. Examples of true forgiveness and the opportunity for a "clean slate" are offered to those who need it. The school has a very wide spectrum of academic ability. Those who are able have their achievements duly celebrated. This is a totally inclusive school where the more academically able and those with educational or behavioural difficulties are appropriately supported. Specific measures have been put in place to ensure the needs of all learners

are met. The formation of an Inclusion Steering group, (representatives from staff, parents, disability groups and outside agencies), Big Wide Talk (opportunities for children and parents of pre-school aged children to engage in communication, language and literacy activities in the community), a Safe Haven (staffed every lunchtime by a very competent learning assistant), breakfast club and employing a very able learning mentor have all contributed to the support and well being of the pupils. The impact of all these initiatives is immense but the true strength of the school lies in its firmly embedded Christian values and beliefs lived out daily.

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

Worship has a high priority within the school and is tailored to suit the specific needs of the learners. It has a significant influence on the nature and ethos of the school. At present, the themes are planned in conjunction with the principles of the SEAL project and are supported with appropriate Biblical references. However, the school intends to introduce the Values for Life programme to broaden the existing plans.

Time for worship is marked by the ringing of a bell and this alerts the whole school community that this is a special part of the school day. Pupils enter the hall in a quiet respectful manner, and the purposeful contemplative atmosphere is maintained through sensitive story telling, prayer and reflective times. A candle is lit and a prayer table used as a focus. Children participated appropriately and the singing was quite spectacular. This is further evidence that the very careful selection of appropriate material is seen as a priority.

There is a considerable amount of informal monitoring and evaluation of worship, but at present it is on a rather ad hoc basis. Visiting governors are asked to fill in a proforma, but the use to which these are put is limited. Pupils are anxious to articulate their views on worship, particularly if it had been related to controversial current affairs. However their views and those of other attending adults are not consistently sought.

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

The leadership and management of the school are good and contribute significantly to the success of the school as a church school. The personal commitment of the headteacher and his staff should be commended. The newly appointed foundation governor is very enthusiastic and positive about her role. She has already been instrumental in re-introducing the focal point for worship and is supporting the introduction of the Values for Life programme. Despite the fact that the parish is without a vicar, the lay reader who was a previous Chair of Governors, regularly conducts worship and gives considerable moral and spiritual support to the whole school community. Closer links with the local parish are now being established.

The mission statement and school vision were recently the subjects of an In Service Training Day in which all stakeholders were encouraged to participate. The Christian foundation of the school was seen as vital in the conception and implementation of the statement and vision.

Evidence of good practice in the teaching of Religious Education was observed as were examples of displays relating to the subject. Annual reports contain information regarding pupil's individual progress in the subject. Suitable methods for reliable assessment are being sought along with consistent methods of monitoring and evaluation which includes the impact the subject has on the pupils' personal and academic development.

The school is a truly Christian institution where pupils are treated fairly as individuals, given opportunities to flourish spiritually and morally and are given every encouragement to reach their full potential in all aspects of school life.