

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bishop Cornish Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,

Lynher Drive,
Saltash,
PL12 4PA.

Diocese: Truro

Local authority: Cornwall

Date of inspection: November 21st 2007

Date of last inspection: 18th & 20th November 2003

School's unique reference number: 112034

Headteacher: Mrs Jenny Thomas

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jenny Pestrige (153)

School context

The school is situated on a large, pleasant site on the outskirts of Saltash, with far reaching views. Amongst the 202 learners, a minority have English as an additional language, although this number is increasing. This Deanery school serves an area that has a combination of social and private housing.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Cornish Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The Christian story is evident throughout the life of the school. It is expressed particularly through the stated aim to esteem every individual. High standards in every aspect of the school reflect a dedicated level of leadership and teaching. The emphasis on the quality of relationships between the whole school community, and with God, is providing an outstanding Christian context for learning.

Established strengths

- The dedicated leadership and management of the Headteacher, supported by an effective and enthusiastic governing body.
- The commitment of all staff to the well being of every child, including their spiritual development, as an expression of the Christian ethos of the school.
- The emphasis on providing an enriched curriculum, with a focus on creativity and the expressive arts, particularly music.

Focus for development

- Review and develop the programme of study and scheme of work for religious education, as part of the school's monitoring process, with a particular focus on continuity and progression.

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

Christian values are woven throughout the life of the school. They are evident in the outstanding quality of relationships at every level. Governors, staff and parents refer to a strong team identity. Christian values underpin the curriculum and are evident in teaching. As a result, the behaviour of learners is outstanding. They enjoy their school because, "the teachers listen to our ideas," and because, "everybody cares about each other." One parent said, "walking into my children's school makes me happy." The school emphasises the value of each individual, and this is seen in the whole school environment. The quality of displays is outstanding. This means that the learners benefit from stimulating and enriching sensory experiences, in classrooms and public areas. Water features, music, incense and life-size figures all combined to entrance learners, and make learning exciting. All of these features provide outstanding opportunities for spiritual development. The school makes this aspect of

learning a priority. Learners benefit from areas for quiet reflection, and also from looking after farm animals. The school also extends learners' imagination and cultural awareness. It achieves this through dramatic and musical productions, such as the Passion Play. Effective links with Africa mean that learners are aware of global issues. Outstanding spiritual development was also seen in all the lessons observed, and in the service of the Eucharist. In a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, learners were given an outstanding opportunity to experience features of the story of "The Animals' Wishes." Teaching included the creation of an imaginary place, using North American artefacts. The atmosphere was created by the use of music, PowerPoint pictures and sensitive questioning and description. This reflected excellent planning and gifted teaching. One focus of the lesson encouraged learners to think about cultural stories, and how they are passed from one generation to another. This reflected the mission of the school, in passing on the Christian story. This lesson was an indication of the high standards, which characterise learning in the school.

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

The enthusiasm and enjoyment of learners in collective worship is evident in the quality of their singing. The outstanding response of all learners to the music captures the atmosphere of the school. This is because the school combines high expectations, with encouragement and excellent teaching. Therefore, learners feel confident to enjoy all the opportunities provided by the school. In the Eucharist observed, an inclusive approach resulted in learners participating in each part of the occasion. The presence of all staff, several governors and parents, emphasised the importance given to worship by the whole school community. Collective worship is organised collaboratively between the Headteacher, and the music coordinator. This means that learners are experiencing a range of styles of worship, through music, as a result of rigorous planning. The outstanding contribution of the music coordinator, means that learners are enjoying especially composed music. This provides a unique opportunity for spiritual development. As a result of collective worship, learners are developing an outstanding awareness of Anglican faith and practice. The staff present outstanding role models for learners by their presence in collective worship. This helps learners to understand the relevance of faith in everyday life. The outstanding links with the Parish Priest and the Foundation governors ensures that learners are aware of the local Church community. This emphasises the learners' understanding of the Church /school partnership.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious education is given a high profile in the school. Each classroom and several public areas contain religious education displays. The quality reflects the high standards of planning by the Headteacher, who is the coordinator. The Headteacher encourages a collaborative approach to the subject's leadership and management. Standards are generally high, with examples of outstanding practice. For example, younger learners are considering the concept of God as a loving father. Valuing each individual is emphasised in a discussion on what a baby needs to be safe and happy. In Key Stage 2, learners achieve high standards in a lesson that focused on the awareness of God. This was because the teacher used a variety of effective strategies, which enabled learners to think about their feelings. These teaching methods included music, PowerPoint pictures and a time of stillness and reflection. The story of Elijah hiding in a cave was used to summarise the different ways Christians can hear God. The resulting prayers, written by learners, were an outstanding indication of the impact of the lesson. The school has identified the need to review the existing religious education syllabus. Currently, there is insufficient continuity and progression in the unit of work featuring Christianity. Some of the units are repetitive and do not build on previous knowledge, across the two Key Stages. The teaching of other world faiths in the school is inclusive, and reflects the school's aims to esteem and educate every child. Learners are making good progress in their understanding of Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, with examples of outstanding practice. For example, the display on Buddhism and the learners' understanding of Buddhist beliefs and practices, are outstanding. The support given to religious education by the Foundation governors is outstanding. The monitoring training provided by the religious education link governor, is an example of best practice. Monitoring and evaluation in religious education means that high expectations of teaching and learning are evident in both key stages.

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

The vision of the Headteacher, has been to develop a 'vibrant, Spirit-filled place', where teachers could 'feed the mind and spirit of all learners.' A strategic emphasis by the Headteacher and governors has been to build an exceptional team of staff and governors, who share this vision. Members of staff provide an outstanding example for learners, of what it means to be a person of faith. For example, the baptism and confirmation of a teacher in the presence of learners. This is an indication of the impact of the Christian ethos on the whole school community. The senior management team are dedicated to helping learners with special educational needs. This also extends to families who have significant pastoral issues. All staff are praised by parents, who state that, "pastorally, the school is wonderful." Governors are effective in their role and enthusiastic about providing high quality education, within a Christian context. Their commitment to providing nurturing childcare is evident in their plans for an eco-nursery, for 2008. The school's relationship with the Parish Priest is outstanding. His support and encouragement have helped to establish the current outstanding Christian ethos. Links with the wider community at local, county and Diocesan level mean that learners have outstanding opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

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