

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Blandford St Mary Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Birch Avenue
Blandford St Mary
Dorset
DT11 9QD

Diocese:

Salisbury

LA:

Dorset

Dates of inspection:

5th February 2008

Date of last inspection:

12,15th January 2004

School's Unique reference number:

113795

Head teacher:

Judy Baker

Inspector's name and number:

John Horrell NS No:250

School context

Blandford St Mary Primary is a growing school with 165 children on roll. The school takes pupils from an area with social housing as well as 44% coming from outside the catchment area. The Blandford pyramid has recently been re organised and the school made the transition from first to primary in September 2005. New building work to accommodate this was completed in November 2007. The percentage of pupils with special needs at 33% is above the national average.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Blandford St Mary Primary as a Church of England school is good.

A tangible Christian based ethos makes a significant contribution to positive values and attitudes to teaching and learning. Progress is good. Pupils' personal development and well being is outstanding and is greatly enhanced by an effective delivery of the Christian principles that are implicit in the Mission Statement and lived out in practice by the school community.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos of the school in which all pupils are nurtured and valued highly
- Strong leadership appreciated by the community
- A creative and stimulating curriculum which makes a significant contribution to pupils Spiritual development
- RE making a good contribution to pupils' outstanding Personal Development
- Good standards of progress

Focus for development

- Develop evaluation of worship to involve all stakeholders
- Involve Foundation Governors in the content and evaluation of the Collective Worship Action Plan
- Evaluate effectiveness of new RE Assessment Policy

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

Learners are valued and feel special at this school, they receive a high standard of care, guidance and support from a dedicated team of teachers and support staff. The Christian ethos in the school is strong and impacts on personal development and the good pupil progress. The church provides support through its foundation governors and regular contributions to acts of worship. These offer opportunities for reflection

and concern for individual needs. The atmosphere around the school is relaxed and very orderly. Parents are very positive about the school and the care and teaching their children receive. The level of pastoral care for the pupils is a strength and very good support is given to those with special needs. A trained teaching assistant gives counselling support to children in difficult circumstances and a parent expressed her appreciation of the support given on her recent bereavement. The school is excellent at promoting health and well being and has achieved Healthy School status. Relationships are very good and this has been maintained by involvement in a project involving the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL). The school is outstanding in its nurturing of Personal Development. Christian values underpin the PHSE and SMSC policies. Learners show a good level of concern for the wider community with areas for support chosen by the school council. The school has raised funds for its own building fund as well as Christian Aid, Comic Relief and Samaritans Purse. The school's caring ethos is highly valued by all stakeholders.

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

Worship is well planned and has an important place in the life of the school. Pupils' talk enthusiastically about aspects of worship and are particularly keen on those which involve elements of fun. A termly programme is agreed by the head teacher and representatives from the church. Themes incorporate the Anglican festivals which are celebrated in school and, where possible, in church. This is effective because the pupils and parents comment on how much they value them. However older pupils were unable to identify any other aspects of the Anglican tradition and the school has identified this as an area for development. The Record File contains good planning and short evaluations on each act of worship. A Collective Worship Action Plan contains some good proposals for future development but does not involve foundation governors in its monitoring or evaluation. The school council are involved in running a competition to create a new lunchtime prayer to reflect the school's relatively new primary status. Pupils have a positive attitude to worship and contribute by listening well, singing with enthusiasm and making contributions with prayers and readings from time to time. In an act of worship on the theme of Shrove Tuesday they were willing and able to share their thoughts on personal forgiveness which was then skilfully related to Lent by the headteacher. Older pupils were able to express their preferences for certain types of worship but were unsure whether it helped them grow spiritually. The school has identified this area for research and development. The coherence between worship in the school and worship in the parish is inhibited by the church being difficult to access safely. The quality of planning has improved since the last inspection, regular records are kept and the school has planned to extend its evaluation of collective worship by involving pupils and governors although this has yet to be included in the Creative Worship Action Plan.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

The subject is given appropriate status and is recognised by governors, staff and parents as important and of value. Standards of attainment are comparable with those in the core subjects. The quality of teaching and learning observed was good and the subject clearly makes a significant contribution to the learners' spiritual and moral development. Year Two pupils demonstrated good prior knowledge of aspects of Judaism and their work on the Shabbat showed appropriate levels of understanding and response. The lesson was very well resourced, and the pupils showed respect when viewing the Shabbat celebrations. They were excited at the prospect of tasting the Challah bread and benefited from the teachers very good planning. Year 5 pupils demonstrated excellent attitudes in their exploration of Islamic artefacts. The good level of teaching and learning was ably demonstrated when one pupil gently reminded another that it would not be respectful to dress up in the special clothing provided for discussion. The one practising Muslim in the class was visibly pleased at the way the lesson was conducted and given special responsibility as the class expert. Regular visits are made to the local church when the vicar (and ex officio governor) takes an active part in the subject. He takes an

interest in the delivery of RE and plans to become involved in its monitoring and evaluation. He is also involved in integrating aspects of the RE syllabus with the Social and Emotional aspects of the curriculum. Schemes of work comply with the relevant syllabus, which reflects the school's Christian foundation. A new assessment system has been designed and recently introduced. Work is given a level at the end of each unit and information is used to set appropriately challenging targets. The coordinator knows her subject well and has identified priorities for development. This is reflected in the school's current RE Action Plan.

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

The head teacher actively promotes the school's mission statement and has a clear personal vision for the school which reflects its Christian foundation. She is encouraged and nourished by the Foundation Governors in promoting the school's Trust Deed. Her strong and caring leadership is valued by the school community. A creative and stimulating curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils spiritual development. The standard of display is excellent and reflects the schools award of Artsmark Gold. The mission statement which incorporates implicit Christian values is well supported by staff and governors and is evident in all public documentation. Foundation governors actively support the Christian character of the school and this is valued and recognised by staff and parents. The head teacher is a member of the PCC and school reports are given on a regular basis. The local minister is an active and supportive member of the governing body and through his regular contact with the school contributes to the high quality of relationships within the community. The school has supportive links with the local church community and enjoys a good level of support from parents at worshipping opportunities. However health and safety issues inhibit the amount of contact the school has with the church building. RE and collective worship make a significant contribution to the area of Personal Development and well being which is outstanding. The school has satisfactory systems in place to evaluate its effectiveness as a church school but not all stakeholders are involved in contributing to this process. The school leaders have a clear view about areas of church school improvement but this is not, as yet, part of a strategic plan.

5th February 2008 SIAS report, Blandford St Mary CEVA Primary School, Blandford St Mary, Dorset DT11 9QD