

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bloxham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Tadmartom Road

Bloxham

Banbury

OX15 4HP

Diocese of Oxford

LA: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 25 February 2007

Date of last inspection: March 2000

School's Unique reference number: 123098

Name of Headteacher: Mr Matthew Ingall

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Mrs Mari Powell 143

Context

Bloxham Church of England School is larger than average and located in a pleasant rural setting. It is to the great credit of all involved with the school that after serious setbacks such as fire and flood it now provides its pupils with a very effective learning environment.

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

The school has a very clear vision of itself as a faith school. The dynamic approach to teaching and learning, together with the strong bond with the local Anglican and also the Baptist church, ensure that the values embedded in the school's mission statement, are consistently promoted. An outstanding feature of the school is its fostering of the value of the whole child within a Christian context.

Established strengths

- The commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to promoting the Christian vision which effectively underpins a harmonious, thoughtful community
- The inclusiveness which raises pupils' self-esteem by valuing and encouraging their contribution to the school and wider community
- Excellent links with the local churches

Focus for development

- Explore further ways in which different groups of children might take responsibility for planning and leading occasional acts of worship
- Ensure that all staff confidently implement the recommendations of the revised local syllabus for religious education and that it provides additional enrichment for school worship

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

The distinctive Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of school life provides an excellent learning environment for all its members. Well-defined, shared Christian principles underpin the school's dedication to celebrating the dignity and worth of every individual child. Christian values are prominent in the school's provision for its more vulnerable members who benefit from a variety of additional support. There is an excellent nurture programme for identified children and a programme of support for traveller children whilst absent from school. Pupils are considerate and respectful towards each other, reflecting very well the consistently caring approach of all the adults towards them. Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural awareness is fostered well through lessons in religious education, school worship and many enrichment activities such as the French

classes. They have a well-developed awareness of God as a higher being and respect the fact that people of different faiths have their own unique traditions of worship. The excellent Code of Conduct, devised in consultation with pupils, provides a comprehensive, strong framework to ensure that the school is a harmonious and positive place for learning. The pupils, led by the school council, are very conscious of the needs of children in less favourable circumstances. They contribute generously to a wide variety of good causes and have a growing sense of important global issues such as ill health and poverty. The church link, through church leaders and the foundation governors, provides powerful, lively support for the creation and communication of the school's Christian ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is regarded as an important element of the school day. Periods when the whole school meets together are well planned according to a comprehensive, well-chosen range of themes that promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development well. The very strong partnership with leaders of the local churches significantly enriches the provision in the school. Pupils and parents spoke readily of their appreciation of the regular occasions when the whole school worships in the local Anglican church and receives support from the Baptist minister. Pupils have a good recognition of important events in the liturgical year and of the distinctive features of Anglican worship. Traditions such as lighting candles to precede prayer and reflection are replicated when worship is held in the school hall. At the time of the inspection, the school worship table was appropriately draped with a purple cloth that pupils recognised as a symbol of Lent. Children enjoy the acts of worship. This is very evident as they listen and sing well. The church club provides pupils with very enjoyable opportunities for contributing to celebrations, for example, at Christingle. The school is now reflecting on ways to broaden the leadership of worship to various groups of pupils and to harness the potential of the two very dedicated coordinators for religious education to further enrich the spiritual and cultural dimensions of worship. A very good example of the growing awareness of religious buildings associated with Islam was seen in a display, produced by older pupils, of features of a mosque. Informative and thoughtful captions provided valuable insights into worship in another faith.

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

The headteacher has an outstandingly clear vision of the Christian purpose of the school. In this he is well supported by the governors, some of whom are comparatively new. They are increasingly identifying systems for well-focused monitoring and evaluation of some of the distinctive aspects of the school such as the impact of worship and the quality of teaching and learning in religious education. The headteacher, staff and governors have comprehensively reviewed the mission statement. It now provides a very effective framework for all the school's activities. The foundation governors, together with other members of the governing body, take very seriously their role in communicating the Christian ethos of the school to the wider community. The headteacher and governors have recently revised the structure of responsibilities in the school. The beneficial effect on teaching and learning in religious education is already considerable, together with support for staff to become familiar with the requirements of the new, revised version of the locally agreed syllabus. Overall, the dynamic and reflective leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Equally, staff and governors are very supportive of the direction in which the school is moving. They appreciate opportunities to initiate and lead significant developments that have a direct and beneficial impact on the pupils' learning within a well-defined Christian context.