

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Castlemorton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Castlemorton,

Malvern,

WR13 6BG

Diocese of Worcester

Worcestershire LA

SIAS inspection: 2 February 2007

Previous S23 Inspection: February 2006

School URN: 290634

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Adsett

SIAS Inspector: NS 398 Mr Robin Sharples

School context

Castlemorton C.E. Primary School is a small village school in a rural location some six miles south east of Malvern, there are 93 pupils on roll of whom around 20% have special needs. The school has regular links with the local church through the consistent efforts of the Incumbent. The location of the school means that such initiatives as Forest School are most successful and influential on the children.

Castlemorton C.E. Primary School is a good school

There is a very happy, industrious and lively atmosphere in which the pupils are effectively encouraged in their learning. The school's links with the Parish and with Boraba School in The Gambia enhance the learners' awareness of the needs of others and are a prominent feature of the school and a very significant part of the life of the pupils.

Established strengths

- The Head Teacher's vision for the school as a Church of England School coupled with the energy and commitment of the local Incumbent;
- The relationships between all of the people connected with the school; **all** the staff, the learners, governors and parents;
- The very well focused learning environment created and sustained by the highly skilled complement of teaching staff

Focus for development

- To seek to enhance opportunities for the spiritual development of the learners through developments in the school environment and in exploration of opportunities for spiritual exploration in established activities such as Forest school and appropriate curriculum areas;
- The continued development of more explicit Christian / Church aspects in school life in line with the school's self evaluation of its Christian ethos through the National Society Toolkit..

Castlemorton C.E. Primary School, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners.

The school staff have worked very hard and successfully to create a warm learning environment in which mutual respect and care are outstanding features. This is seen in the relationships between learners who spoke of the school as being a place of '*...fun and friends...*'; and particularly in the staff's sensitive and skilful approach to pupils' special needs. These relationships, while excellent are not related explicitly to the school's Christian foundation for the learners. The children's learning environment is very well focussed to give the learners the best possible opportunity to flourish and is being brought into closer conjunction with the school's Christian foundation as the new Head Teacher's priorities become reflected in the school planning - this was seen in a sensitively managed lesson

which bound together literacy, preparation for a forthcoming Christingle service and the school's extensive eco-awareness; the class responded very enthusiastically and positively to this activity.

The ethos of the school, at present, very strongly supports the social, moral and cultural development of the learners in many ways through such bodies and activities as school council, eco-council, Forest School and assemblies. The learners' spiritual awareness however reflects little appreciation of the Christian foundation of the school. The Head Teacher and Governors, especially the local Incumbent, are aware of this and have established a set of priorities to redress the balance. This pattern of development is in its very early stages and thus the self-evaluation as outlined in the National Society Toolkit SEF has been limited in its usefulness, however the Head Teacher's own evaluation of the school's circumstances is very accurate and has formed a solid basis for future planning.

The school environment has displays which celebrate pupils' work and achievements, and links to the church. There are special areas for physical activities, exploration of habitats, forest school and quiet area. All of these are significant in the children's lives but again do not draw significantly on explicit Christian sources to enhance spiritual developments at present.

The impact of collective worship on the learners is good.

The children spoke of appreciating 'assemblies', especially those conducted by "Rev'd Chris" (the Incumbent), indeed everyone connected with the school; parents, learners, staff and governors spoke very highly of his contribution to school life. The pattern of assemblies is well established and understood by the learners and has been supplemented by 2 or 3 'assemblies' at church in each school year. While the learners enjoy 'assemblies' they do not always associate these with worship in a Christian sense, for example speaking of most assembly stories as being moral tales. Despite not making explicit links the children were able to discuss the Lord's prayer meaningfully and appreciate that such elements as prayer and song are aspects of worship. The children have experience of the church year and its festivals through assemblies and visits associated with R.E. and other parts of the curriculum. The Head Teacher's pre-inspection evaluation of the nature of worship in the school has led to the creation of an imaginative plan to develop links to the church and to make closer identifications with those aspects of school life which could be considered as worship such as specific parts of assemblies, prayers at other times of the day and activities at church. In the assembly seen during the inspection the Head Teacher was able to demonstrate her approach very effectively; the part of the assembly concerned with awards was clearly demarcated from the act of worship by the use of a candle and there was a tangible change in learners' response during this time. The worship in school has, historically been closely linked with moral and social/emotional aspects of life. The Head Teacher's planning (in conjunction with staff and governors) is carefully designed to lead to the enhancement of the children's spiritual experience in their school life, including the extension of Christian worship experience. This is being achieved through closer links with parish community and the involvement of visitors representing a variety of denominations. The impact of this on pupils is already being felt; in discussion after the observed assembly the pupils were able to identify that there was a deliberate difference in atmosphere in the two parts of the assembly.

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

The management of the school is, to a certain extent, in a state of flux at present; there has been a change of Head Teacher, staff and governors. It is to the credit of everyone that these changes have not been allowed to make a hiatus in the life of the school - everyone concerned has worked very hard to minimise any adverse impact on the children. The pupils spoke most warmly of both the new and previous Head Teacher.

The Head Teacher's appraisal of the school's status and subsequent whole school planning are outstanding. The result has been a change which is appreciated by the staff as being both a significant step forward while maintaining continuity with the school's prior development. The governors are very clear about the status of Castlemorton as a Church school, this is particularly so on the part of the Foundation Governors. The Governors share the vision of the Head Teacher for the school and are very enthusiastic about their support for the developments that she is leading.

The staff of the school present a coherent team who are very concerned for the well being of the pupils in their care being very sensitive to the needs of the pupils. This is true of **all** staff in the school; for example the role of the caretaker has been developed to embrace a caring relationship with the children, similarly the school's secretary has a vital role which is respected by staff and parents alike. The school's developments are discussed openly and ideas from staff are welcomed. The pupils of the school feel involved in the decisions that are made through their participation in school council and the eco-council, They are very well informed about such initiatives as grounds developments and particularly concerned with the continuing need to support Boraba School in the Gambia even setting up their own fund-raising activities. This involvement is further enhanced, for example through the pairing of older and younger pupils at various times.

The overall impact of this approach to the management of the school is that the children experience a coherent school day which combines learning with play and responsibility .

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