

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

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

Feltham Lane,

Frome

BA11 5AJ

**Diocese: Bath and Wells**

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2007

Date of last inspection: March 2002

School's unique reference number: 123757

Headteacher: Mrs S Bullmore

Inspector's name and number: Jacqueline Waters-Dewhurst 80

### **School context**

Christ Church C of E First School has 162 pupils plus a 20 (FTE) place nursery class which now operates in The Key Centre for Children and the Community. The LA nursery class has formed a partnership with a private provider in order to meet the core offer of integrated early years education and childcare.

The school serves an area with significant social deprivation in the town of Frome. Almost all pupils come from this area and have English as their first language. Pupil mobility is low. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. A high proportion of pupils, about 40%, have learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD). The school has a 'Nurture Group' for pupils who have social and emotional difficulties. It also hosts and manages, the Key Centre, a combined children's and healthy living centre. Attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes is very low.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school are good.**

The school's ethos is shared by all members of the school community. The school cares and supports both pupils and parents in very practical ways and parents consider that being part of the school is like being part of "a big family". The education that the school provides for its pupils reflects the care for and understanding of the whole child and is demonstrated by all members of the school community. Inclusion at the school is impressive and all pupils benefit from learning to accept everyone especially those with differences. The Nurture Group plays a valuable role in ensuring that the needs of the child are put first. Support staff engage enthusiastically with pupils during breaks, playing with the pupils using a variety of appropriate equipment. Relationships on all levels are excellent and embody Christian values of love, forgiveness and service. Staff, governors, pupils and parents have a passion for the school which is a credit to the work of all involved. The school and Parish Church are moving forward to establish strong school/church links. The church prays regularly for the school, presents the pupils with Bibles and includes school news in the parish magazine. The school has services in the church and welcomes members of the church into the school.

### **Established strengths**

- Communication between staff and between staff and parents is excellent
- Provision for a high level of pupils with learning, behavioural, emotional or physical difficulties is a real strength of the school both in classes and in the Nurture Group
- Care for the whole family and the extremely positive relationships lead to a diverse range of parents being passionate in their support for the school
- The vision for the school's future and the needs of the children and families which has led to the building and continued development of the Key Centre

### **Focus for development**

- To include a section developing church school distinctiveness in the school development plan
- To raise the profile of prayer in collective worship and through reflection areas in the classrooms
- To use Christian signs, symbols or displays in the classrooms, shared areas and, with due regard to other partners, in the nursery entrance to ensure people can immediately recognise Christ Church as a church school

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

The school's dedication to inclusion means that all pupils feel valued and special. It also supports parents in a variety of initiatives such as PEEP (Peers Early Years Partnership). The school community are aware and appreciative of the school's Christian ethos and values, one parent commented on how the school was "achieving Bible principles". Children are supportive and caring of each other and this attitude of care extends beyond the school grounds. This is especially clear when seeing how positively children respond to those peers who have physical, emotional, academic or behavioural difficulties. Children look forward to coming to school where they feel safe and enjoy lessons. They have a pride in their school and an understanding of what makes it a church school. They can explain the meaning of the school badge on their sweatshirts. The needs of each pupil are catered for academically and emotionally. All staff are encouraged and feel confident enough to take on the development of new initiatives and to develop further those that are in place. The school now needs to ensure that the Christian foundation, which is implicit in and underpins the school's values and ethos is made more explicit in the fabric of the school.

### **Collective Worship makes a good impact on the life of the school.**

The Collective Worship observed showed pupils to be attentive and enthusiastic. They were willing to answer questions and sit quietly and reverently. Teaching staff are present and support pupils with difficulties quietly, effectively and without disturbing the worship. The vicar comes in regularly to take collective worship and foundation governors attend some services. The school Bibles are obviously a valued resource and pupils independently look up the stories told in collective worship. Pupils and parents are appreciative of the Bibles presented to the children in a recent act of collective worship. Parents report that children often sing the hymns taught in school at home and that even the very youngest pupils are aware of Bible stories. Pupils understand the purpose of collective worship as a time to "think about God and what he's like, "... his kindnesses" and to communicate information and ideas to the school community. While describing the collective worship songs that they liked the group spontaneously broke into their favourite and sang it all the way through. Pupils are beginning to understand the purpose of prayer. Prayers during the school day include those said or sung during collective worship and grace in classrooms before lunch. Some children stated that they prayed themselves. The school could now raise the profile of prayer in the school, enabling children to recognise the very many purposes and types of prayer as well as allowing more opportunities for reflection, both in collective worship and through establishing reflection corners around the school.

### **The leadership and management of the school as a church school are good with some outstanding aspects.**

The head, senior management team and governors all have a strong sense of the vision that successfully drives the school forward. This vision is shared and supported by all members of the school community. The self-evaluation of the school by the head and governors is effective and largely accurate with the exception of some areas where they have been unduly harsh in their final gradings. Some governors have accessed diocesan church school training

and there are plans for others to take this up in the next academic year. New governors have recently been appointed and are therefore not all experienced but they show a passion for the school, knowledge of its ethos and a will to continue to develop the schools links with the church and its church foundation. The vicar and foundation governors are building positive relationships within the school and have practical ideas to bring church and school closer together.

The schools effective and inspirational leadership has enabled the school to become the successful, caring place it is which truly "puts the child first".

SIAS report May 2007 Christ Church Church of England First School, Feltham Lane, Frome BA11 5AJ