

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Compton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,

Higher Compton Road,
Plymouth,
PL3 5JB

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Plymouth

Date of inspection: 25th September 2007

Date of last inspection: September 2002

School's unique reference number: 113416

Headteacher: Mr. Stephen Cleave

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

School context

The school is situated in a residential area of mixed housing in the city of Plymouth, and has 328 learners. The learners are mostly White British. The school has a large site, which includes a playing field and a swimming pool. The school is over-subscribed and there are regular appeals regarding admissions.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Compton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

The school has a strong and effective community identity, underpinned by its Church of England foundation. It has an holistic, child-centred approach to education, with an imaginative and challenging focus, so that all learners are given the opportunity to reach their potential.

Established strengths

- The dynamic leadership of the Headteacher and senior management team and the effectiveness of their collaborative management style.
- The strong community identity of the school, which reflects the partnership with the parents, the governors and the Church.
- The emphasis on creative and reflective thinking skills, which is making a good impact on the spiritual development of learners.

Focus for development

- Create a process to monitor and evaluate the overall Christian ethos of the school.
- Collate the annual records of collective worship to form long-term plans, and involve a wider group of learners, parents and governors in developing the monitoring and evaluation process.
- Ensure that the timing and planning given to the class-based act of worship reflects the emphasis given by the school to collective worship overall.

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

The school places an emphasis on the education and well-being of the 'whole child', set securely within a Christian context. Therefore, parents are confident of the school's Christian identity. Parents speak highly of the school's links with the local Church, which has provided a range of supportive activities for their children. These include such things as a Church Week, holiday clubs and an after-school club. As a result of these initiatives, several learners and their families attend the Church. Learners are happy and enjoy school. This is as a result of the good relationships between staff and learners, between learners and between staff. The Citizenship project, linking the school with another Plymouth primary school, is a good example of wider community links. The overall approach of the school to teaching and learning supports the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of learners. This can be seen, for example, in the use of teaching using the 'Philosophy for Children' initiative. In answer to the question, "What is God like?" learners responded, "God is all of life," "I think God is the future," and "God is invisible but is still all around us". As a result of this initiative, learners are encouraged to ask ultimate and challenging life questions. This is resulting in a positive impact in the lives of learners. In a Key Stage 2 religious education lesson, learners investigate why the Father should forgive His son, in the story of the 'Return of the Prodigal'. The use of the Rembrandt painting, ICT and key questions, result in a good level of understanding by the learners. For example, "I think the Father should forgive his son because good fathers love their sons". The responses of the learners in this lesson reflect at least good levels of understanding. In the Foundation stage, learners are able to ask philosophical questions, using a painting as a stimulus. Their responses reflect a further example of above average attainment. The example of a mock Church wedding complete with vintage wedding car, a ceremony with guests and a reception, means that learners are given a good opportunity to think about marriage and its importance for family life. The multi-cultural aspects of Christianity are reinforced for learners by the involvement of missionaries from local Churches, who are about to work overseas. This is also an example of the close relationship with the Church. Learners feel that they are consulted and are actively involved in decision-making in the school. All learners enjoy playtime, and the use of peer mediators, a school council, prefects and monitors, all empower learners. This results in their good behaviour. The school is providing an environment that is calm, yet where learners are stimulated, challenged and excited.

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

Collective worship is benefiting from a recent review, which took place in the summer term. As a result, the school provides a variety of occasions for worship. These include whole school, Key Stage and class-based opportunities. The act of worship observed illustrated the ethos and atmosphere of the school. Learners walked in singing "Our God is a great big God", which created a happy and praising atmosphere. The theme of 'Trust God in all ways', using the story of Noah, held the learners' attention. The theme was well planned and led, which resulted in a very good level of learners' behaviour. The clear theme and focus meant that learners were able to understand the concept of trusting and waiting for God to act. The invitation to pray, in addition to the talk, meant that this entire occasion was a celebration for the whole school community, including all staff. A feature of the effective partnership with the Church is the regular visits of the Vicar and the Curate to lead worship. Links with a previous Church youth worker, and future plans with two new post-holders, all indicate the importance given by the school to the Church / school partnership. This is an example of best practice, which is highly valued by parents. The school's emphasis on developing thinking skills

includes collective worship. 'Thinking Assemblies', 'Thought for the Week', and a changing weekly prayer, all indicate the centrality of prayer in the school. This is emphasised by the concluding prayer at the end of each day. This is making a major contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Apart from the use of PowerPoint, the school has not yet fully explored the potential of providing a specific focus for learners in the hall. The use of this space to promote spiritual development is therefore under-developed. There is a regular curriculum audit of the views of staff, which recently identified the need for an increased use of singing as a form of worship. However, there is not currently a formal process for monitoring and evaluating collective worship that involves learners, staff, governors and parents. Learners are not involved in overall planning. Whilst there is an extensive record of actual acts of worship over time, planning is half-termly and there is no long-term planning. The collective worship policy is on the school development plan for review this term, and does not as yet reflect the new, revised worship practices. Due to the fact that the review is very recent, the class-based act of worship is currently limited to a prayer. This is therefore under-developed. The school is in the process of expanding this opportunity for worship.

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

The school has a strong, confident and dynamic senior management team. This is led by a Headteacher who is enthusiastic and committed to his role as the leader of a Church school. This can be seen in the extensive and unequivocal references to the Church of England foundation of the school in the OfSTED self-evaluation form. This good practice means that all stakeholders are aware of the Christian distinctiveness of the school. Governor participation in upholding and promoting the church/school partnership is good. This reinforces the strong community partnership between the school, the Church and the wider community. Effective management by the senior team is seen in the recent review of worship, and in the initiatives in religious education. Both religious education and collective worship are given status in the curriculum. They are well resourced. These factors are making a good impact on the learners' understanding of Christianity. Whilst the school has a paragraph on 'vision', there is no specific mission statement. Currently, no links with the Church of England foundation of the school are made on policy documents. The term 'Christian ethos' is used in the text on 'vision', but is not subsequently explained in the aims of the school. Collective worship provides opportunities for the ongoing spiritual development of the staff, as well as learners. However, there are currently no planned opportunities for the spiritual reflection of staff on other occasions.

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