

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Cuddington Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant School**

Upper Church Street,  
Cuddington  
Aylesbury,  
HP18 0AP

**Diocese: Oxford**

Local Authority: Buckinghamshire

Date of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007

Date of last inspection: 7/9<sup>th</sup> October 2002

School's Unique reference number: 110452

Name of Headteacher: Pam Talbot

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Alan Thornsby 137

#### **Context**

Cuddington C of E infant school is a small school serving the local community, but also drawing from other nearby villages, because of its good reputation. The school is federated with another voluntary aided school in the village of Dinton and it is the aim of the governing body, on behalf of the parents and pupils, to develop the school into a 4-11 primary school.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cuddington Infant School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

The local community values the difference its school makes to the way the children achieve and develop as people. They show an exceptionally mature understanding of how to live out Christian love in their lives.

#### **Established strengths**

- The impact of love and compassion that is evident in the daily lives of the whole school community
- The links with St Nicholas Church
- The commitment of the governing body, head and staff in their drive to provide the best possible education for pupils

#### **Focus for development**

- Make more explicit links between values and the teaching of Jesus to reinforce the visual learning of pupils and the impact of the good practice.

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

The mission statement and aims of the school reflect a strong Christian ethos that is clearly evident in every aspect of the life of the school. This is seen through the challenge for everyone in school to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. For adults this gives the drive to provide high expectations of each other and mutual support for all to achieve. Children show they are loved and valued and they in turn show a mature level of care and compassion for others. The most salient practical example of Christian love and compassion in action is the links with and support of the Jenny and Jessy School in Uganda. This school, originally introduced by St Nicholas Church, enables pupils to fully empathise with others less fortunate than themselves and they readily raise funds through organised and individual activities. A parent makes regular visits to exchange gifts and news and pupils enjoy this direct contact. Effective tracking and monitoring procedures ensure teachers know exactly how well each child is progressing and plan the next steps in their work. Pupils feel secure and well cared for in school. They know how to care for each other in school and in particular, explain how the friendship bench is used. They enjoy sharing in each other's achievements because they are clear what qualities they are striving to

develop. The headteacher and governors listen to what children say and respond to their ideas, for example, the establishment of a weekly hot lunch. This was the result of the village gardening club organising a potato growing competition. Pupils enjoyed the potatoes as a part of a hot lunch, and the request for regular hot meals followed and was organised.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Worship is a central focus to the life of the school and, with RE and PHSE, is successful as a time to explore and nurture the way to behave and treat other people in their daily lives. The church and school together (CAST) group has an impressive impact on the worship, meeting regularly to evaluate and plan worship and to organise family assembly, a monthly act of worship held in church. This enhances the worshipping experience of pupils because it takes place in church, with parents and members of the village joining them to extend the community. The range of worship leaders, including the staff and church members, further develops this. Pupils understand how Bible stories help them learn about Jesus and God and they have a mature understanding of how these messages impact on their own lives and experiences. Pupils respond to a special atmosphere with their good behaviour and anticipation. Prayer is an important aspect of worship, at lunchtime and at the beginning and end of the day. Pupils explain the smoke from the candle, used to mark the beginning and end of worship, goes up to remind them of prayers going to God. Children value prayer as a time to say sorry and thank you. Year Two children regularly read a prayer while members of other faiths use this time for reflection. All children take part in worship by singing enthusiastically and even new members of the school feel confident in joining in actions to songs.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

An enthusiastic coordinator ensures staff have the planning and resources to deliver a creative and challenging approach to RE. She has a long-term action plan for the subject and is well supported by the head, local authority and diocese. She also contributes to the RE curriculum with the federated school at Dinton. Pupils have a good understanding of Christianity and are able to relate their learning in lessons to their own lives, because of the good teaching and range of teaching styles. For example, in a lesson in which pupils were challenged to empathise with the changing feelings of the prodigal son, visual, aural and kinaesthetic learning styles were successfully used to engage all of the children in the class. This, combined with skilful questioning, enabled pupils to relate to the story as well as their own experiences. Younger pupils exploring the theme of 'Belonging' created their own family trees and were encouraged to describe the enjoyable times they shared with their families. As part of developing the thinking skills of children, pupils in Year Two are encouraged to consider a weekly 'thinking question', such as 'would you rather be a winter or summer day? or 'what would happen if everything were made of chocolate? This helps children engage in sharing 'big questions' in school and at home. Written work also shows there is a lot of maturity and understanding in pupils learning about and from religion, for example, in their responses to a request to identify the qualities needed to be a godparent. Monitoring, work sampling and assessment are used to inform progress and future planning. These also indicate that pupils achieve as well as they do in core subjects. The commitment of the staff indicates there is excellent capacity to continue to develop even further.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding.**

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding because of the shared vision and dedication to Christian love in action. Every action and decision made by the head and governing body is challenged and driven by the Christian value 'love your neighbour as yourself.' Foundation governors are active in their commitment to this aspect of the school being at the forefront of any development. Parents praise the school for its commitment to their children and the successful beginning it gives to their education. The commitment of the whole community in striving to create a primary school for the area is indicative of the pride it takes in and success of the ethos and education provided by this school. The school's self evaluation is accurate and shows the school has the capacity to continue to thrive. Although governors consider distinctiveness as a church school in the development plan, the school may wish to explore how to give a higher visual profile to its values and Biblical origins to reinforce pupils learning. The school makes use of the church as a teaching resource, a place of worship and as a venue for performances. The links between the school, church and village, in shared activities and fund raising further illustrate the Christian love of the school.