

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Cury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Churchtown

Cury

Helston

TR12 7BW

Diocese: Truro

Local authority: Cornwall

Dates of inspection: 30 April 2008

Date of last inspection: January 2002

School's unique reference number: 112001

Headteacher: Jean Whetham

Inspector's name and number: Lyn Field

Context

Cury is a very small, rural school on the Lizard Peninsular with 26 pupils. A number of them joined the school after Year 2 and for the first time, the school is oversubscribed for reception places in the next academic year. Pupils come from a wide range of home backgrounds and most are White British. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. A new school hall has added significantly to the accommodation.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cury Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

This is an improving school at the heart of the village community and is the key point of contact with the church. The staff work hard to create an atmosphere in which pupils can flourish. The pupils in turn develop as sensitive and caring individuals, enthusiastic about life and learning. They understand how Christian values shape daily life because of the strong links between collective worship and religious education.

Established strengths

- The efforts of staff and governors to provide a wide range of experiences for pupils
- The care and support that pupils provide for each other
- The knowledge pupils have of Christianity

Focus for development

- To develop the pupils' use of religious and emotional language to help them express their spiritual ideas
- To monitor the impact of collective worship and RE by gathering the views of pupils
- To make use of the views of all groups in the school community in order to prioritise the next steps as a church school.

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

The pupils are confident and welcoming. They work well together and are clearly proud of their school. Wednesday lunch, for example, where the school provides a cooked meal for all pupils, is a social occasion and real conversation flows easily. The pupils themselves make sure everyone is included and this is indicative of the exceptional support they give each other. They show a genuine interest in people as individuals and they learn this from the good relationships they enjoy with staff in the school. New pupils settle quickly and any support needed extends to the whole family. Circle time, when the whole school sits round together, is developing as a forum for the open and honest discussion of ideas. Subjects range from the best way to resolve disagreements to improving the school grounds. The pupils know how important it is to listen to what everyone has to say. They identify love, trust and comfort as the

most important Christian values in the school. The trust they have in their teachers is the first example they give and they liken it to the way that the disciples responded to Jesus. The staff, parents and governors make considerable efforts to ensure that pupils benefit from the widest range of experiences in the local area. Children relish the challenges of numerous activities such as sailing, break dance, yoga and learning brass instruments. Their spiritual awareness is good although they sometimes find it difficult to find the words to describe exactly how a particular event has affected them. Displays around the school indicate that they respond to the meanings of stories and the plight of people in deprived areas of the world. There is little, however, that they can access independently for spiritual reflection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Pupils enjoy worship in church. They respond well to the special atmosphere of the building because they know why different features are there from their RE lessons. Several pupils describe how the figures in the carvings and the stained glass make it feel a very reassuring place. They understand the meaning of the Christmas Nativity and the Easter Eucharist because these have been the focus of special activity days in school. Parents tell stories of how their children have shared what they have learned at home. The services in church are increasingly well attended by parents and villagers and are a key point of contact between the church and the community. School families are generally not regular worshippers but parents feel comfortable in the services and enjoy them for themselves. Prayer is part of the pattern of the school day and pupils turn to this when they are touched by events in the local or national news. They know the Lord's Prayer and volunteer to lead prayers at the end of the day. The school is currently working to improve worship in school. Pupils are already making use of prayer times that include some silence for their own thoughts. They have a deeper religious understanding of themes, such as love, now that these extend throughout the week. It is still difficult for pupils to explain what worship means to them because symbols and simple rituals are not used regularly enough to help them think about this.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The school regularly assesses the standards that individual pupils achieve in RE. This shows that overall, they do equally as well as they do in their other subjects and the younger pupils make slightly better progress. This is because these children have benefited from improvements in RE from their start in school. Pupils are now more interested in their lessons because they are discovering new information that they say surprises them. Teachers are posing them more questions about what faith means and they feel that they will be able to make choices for themselves when they grow up. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They know the order of events in Jesus' life and can explain the significance of details in the stories. Year 5 pupils, for example, talk about what it meant for Jesus to heal a leper and what is surprising about the time when he washed the feet of his disciples. The staff have rightly identified the need to ensure pupils use the correct religious language when talking about faith and this is what they are currently working to improve. The pupils are not as confident in talking about other world faiths. They do not find it easy to make connections between what people believe and the particular way they live their lives. Teachers know this but it is difficult to address at the moment because topics in other subjects that link to different religions are not taught at the same time of the year. The school recognises the need to look at how these are planned.

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

The headteacher and foundation governors are passionately committed to this school. They have a real desire to provide children with a spiritual basis for life. They recognise that improvements have been made and there is still more to be done in the school. Better lines of communication have opened up and a productive partnership with the church has continued through two periods without a vicar. The new priest feels he is inheriting a strong basis on which to build. Governors are actively involved in school life and give practical help as well as pastoral support. They gather the views of people in the community on an informal basis but are not clear how to make the best use of these as part of their monitoring role. For example, every year they each spend half a day in school working on a practical project with a small group of pupils. In the course of conversation they learn what pupils feel about life in school but

the best use is not made of this feedback. The headteacher and staff have accurately assessed how the school is progressing as a church school. Their work shows insight into where the school's strengths lie and where improvement is needed. They have consulted with foundation governors but there is currently no point at which the views and ideas of all groups are brought together in order to shape the next stage of development.

SIAS report April 2008 Cury Church of England Primary School Helston TR12 7BW