

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Dartington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Shinners Bridge
Dartington
Devon
TQ9 6JD

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon
Dates of inspection: 21st September 2006
Date of last inspection:
School's unique reference number: 113394
Headteacher: Annie Tempest
Inspector's name and number: Janet Bond 247

School context

Dartington is a large primary school with ten classes housed in a very unusual range of buildings spread over a wide area. The main site is a ten minute walk from the foundation class, and a stream bisects the main site. Although it serves the local village, through parental choice most pupils come from outside the catchment area. Ten per cent of pupils come from a range of minority backgrounds which is unusual for the area and eleven pupils are designated traveller children.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dartington Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Christian values underpin all aspects of school life. These ensure that all individuals are valued and empowered. All are nurtured to have a respect for themselves, for others and for the environment. The community provides a strong sense of responsibility coupled with a vitality and enthusiasm for learning and moving forwards.

Established strengths

- The ethos of the school promotes an outstanding attitude in pupils to their school, to each other and to the environment
- Clearly understood Christian values underpin excellent behaviour and relationships
- Excellent support allows all to strive for and achieve their best in all aspects of their life

Focus for development

- Further develop ways of tracking individual pupil progress in Religious Education

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

The core values of love, respect, tolerance and inclusiveness are at the heart of all aspects of school life. As a result, excellent relationships are visible within school. Pupils are confident to contribute to the vibrant and creative environment. They know their contributions are valued and acted upon, for example the proposed new ecologically innovative school building. As a result pupils develop stewardship and a sense of responsibility for their school. Pupils talk with pride about school because they have ownership of it. Pupils self confidence benefits from the many opportunities provided for them to take responsibility, such as the "buddy" system, friendship bench, school council and listening friends. To support their self confidence and effectiveness, pupils are trained, for example as listeners or as Pupil Qualified Teachers. Pupils practice a generosity of spirit, understanding and care through the wide inclusion programme with other schools, including the neighbouring special school.

The Christian character of the school encourages and challenges the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils to an outstanding level, for example, the unusual building and environment are most effectively used to promote personal development and spiritual reflection. Lessons in religious education very effectively support this growth. A wide range of appropriate resources help pupils develop a better understanding of their own and other faiths. However, tracking of pupil progress in religious education is not developed sufficiently to fully inform teaching. The nature trail in the grounds is well used to support discussions on the environment and the wonders of nature. All pupils feel valued and special because all have access to the wide range of after school clubs and school projects. As a result pupils work to their best. Parents are actively involved in all aspects of school life. The moral code of the school, the inclusiveness and empowerment, apply equally to pupils, staff and parents. As a result, pupils flourish.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. It provides pupils with opportunities for spiritual growth while reinforcing Christian teaching and values. Local clergy are actively involved in school life. They help provide pupils with an understanding and experience of Anglican practice. The community as a whole celebrate achievements. Pupils actively contribute to this sense of community through readings, drama, and music. The opportunities provided for pupils to consider and think through some of the larger issues of life in their own particular way are reflected in the pupil prayer book and displays emerging from collective worship themes and religious education lessons. To ensure relevance to pupils their views were sought on school worship and appropriate changes made, clearly showing how their opinions are valued. The termly overview of planned collective worship is reinforced in each class. Circle time, opportunities for quiet reflection and class prayers effectively support collective worship and further impact on attitudes and spiritual growth. Pupils are confident and articulate, using Christian terminology effectively and appropriately.

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

The quality of leadership is outstanding in nurturing and developing a community which shares a strong and distinctive Christian vision. This vision is explicit in all aspects of school life. The school has firmly established a culture of accurate and effective self evaluation to inform future developments. All within the community are empowered to contribute with responsibility. This is clearly shown in the excellent relationships within the school, with parents and with the wider community. The headteacher, staff, pupils, governors, parents and local clergy are fully committed to creating an excellent school. All are enabled to share and contribute to the vision. This has resulted in a vibrant and caring Christian ethos, encouraging all to flourish. This is explicit in all policies and documents that are the foundations for the work of the school. Religious education is well led and planned and runs in parallel to collective worship, with links through the moral values of the school. Pupils are well prepared for later life through their involvement in projects outside school, such as care of the environment. Professional development of staff, parents and pupils is ongoing, resulting in a dynamic environment open to change and striving for improvement. All within the community are empowered and active in maintaining and extending the Christian ethos of the school.