

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Dawley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Doseley Road North,
Dawley,
Telford.
Shropshire TF4 3AL

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Telford and Wrekin

Dates of inspection: 18th March 2009

Date of last inspection: 20th and 21st March 2006

School's unique reference number: 123544

Headteacher: Mrs S Thomas

Inspector's name: Mr Gilroy

NS Inspector number: 007

School context

Dawley CE VA Primary school serves the local area and is slightly bigger than the average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals and the number who have been identified with learning difficulties are both higher than average. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dawley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School with Nursery as a Church of England school are good

This is a good Church of England Primary School where strong Christian principles underpin all aspects of school life. This has a positive impact upon pupils' learning and behaviour. The creation of a safe and secure school community helps to ensure that the children are maturing both spiritually and academically. The caring attitudes of the staff exemplify the way in which the school's Christian principles are the foundation of its drive to be successful.

Established strengths

- The welcoming and caring Christian ethos in which every child really does matter.
- Relationships between pupils, staff and other members of the school are excellent; pupils are listened to, they feel valued, safe and secure and are keen to learn.
- Pupils and parents acknowledge the importance of worship and the key Christian values that the school promotes.

Focus for development

- Involve pupils, staff and governors in monitoring the impact of collective worship and religious education.
- Review the religious education curriculum to ensure that pupils gain a greater understanding of other world religions and of modern Christian leaders.

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

Christian values prevail throughout the school and result in very good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils feel valued and special because of the individual care and recognition they receive. The Christian values of respect, trust, peace, service and forgiveness are core to the ethos of the school. These values are having a strong impact on the personal and spiritual development of learners. The atmosphere around school is relaxed and orderly. High quality relationships are a real strength and permeate throughout the whole school community. Conflicts are dealt with promptly and fairly, in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. The staff meet the needs of the majority of pupils in a variety of ways, ensuring that the children, no matter what their background or ability feel secure, safe, and able to learn. The school recognises and values

the learners' achievements each week during the celebration worship so that pupils are motivated to do their best. Christian stewardship is good and encouraged through charity fund-raising. Such actions make the pupils very aware of the Christian responsibility to those in need. The understanding of the Christian faith is enhanced by the both the 'Spirituality' and the 'Awe and Wonder' books containing the pupils' work which are found throughout the school and contribute to their spiritual development. The pupils are articulate and very willing to share what they have learned in religious education lessons, collective worship and in other areas of the curriculum. There are a very wide range of attractive different areas within the grounds, many of which the children have helped develop, including both active and quiet places where children may play or sit and be reflective as the need arises. This recognition of the different ways in which the pupils may wish to spend their non-class time is indicative of the concern for the differing needs of the pupils. It also bears testimony to the high level of concern the school has for the environment. Parents are very supportive of the school's church foundation. They speak highly of the school and its level of care for the whole child. Parents choose the school because of its clear, strong Christian foundation, describing it as "a warm loving school" and a "special place".

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The daily act of worship is central to the development of the school. It is the time when the issues that the school sees as important are addressed and plays a significant part in developing the pupils' good understanding of the spiritual dimension of life. It also makes a good contribution to the learners' moral, social and cultural development. It is instrumental in developing Christian values and there is good evidence that these are impacting upon the pupils. Learners have a very positive attitude to worship and gain a great deal as the themes very effectively address the matters that are important to young children and relate to their interests and experiences. The worship programme is based around the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) and a variety of Christian themes. Pupil progress and achievement are celebrated and each participant is helped to feel part of a loving, Christian community. The collective worship observed during the inspection, led by a member of the clergy team, made good use of Anglican tradition with opening and closing responses, the use of prayer and song. Pupils participated with reverence and enjoyment, singing enthusiastically and joining in with prayer and reflection. They responded with great sensitivity and reflected on important issues. They understand that the clear messages given in worship and have an impact on the way they lead their lives. Pupils have good recall of both Bible and other messages that have been taught during worship and are able to explain their meaning. Learners value participation in worship and particularly remember those that involve them in an active way. The clergy team lead collective worship each Wednesday morning and pupils look forward to their services as well as the services held three times a year in Holy Trinity church

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good

Pupils' enjoyment of religious education is evident in their positive response to questions asked and tasks set. Pupils make good progress in religious education during their time in the school and their attainment is in line with the other core subjects and is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of Biblical stories and messages and can apply key concepts to their own lives. Pupils are interested in religious education and can talk openly about the factual nature of the subject and their beliefs. They are developing the skills to learn from the Christian religion, such as relating parable messages and applying them to moral situations. One year two boy stated, that the '*Bible is a sort of manual for Christians to help them live their lives*'. The Rector and the clergy team are regularly in class, giving practical support and advice. Pupils are interested in religious education and can talk openly about their beliefs. Where the teaching of religious education moves from satisfactory to good, the work is differentiated so all the pupils can achieve, and the tasks provide motivation and stimulate interest. There are some good examples of pupils using their writing skills well but some of the writing tasks for more able pupils lack sufficient challenge. A range of teaching methods are used including drama and storytelling techniques. Religious education is led by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and very well organised subject leader who is keen to help staff extend their subject expertise. The next step is to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of more recent leaders of Christianity and of other major world religions, both of which are currently underdeveloped.

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

The head teacher has a clear vision for the school and she is given excellent support by the staff team and the governing body. Between them they have established a strong sense of Christian community with genuine commitment to creating an environment in which the word of God means something positive in the lives of their pupils. The staff support each other very well and relationships are excellent. School documentation, including the spirituality policy reviewed as a result of the last inspection, now clearly promotes the school's status which is at the core of all that it does. Governors are committed to promoting this distinctive character of the school and recognise that it brings an extra dimension to the lives of children and adults. There are a number of displays in each classroom and in communal areas, which reinforce the specifically Christian nature of the school and enable pupils to talk with confidence about the school as a church school. The parents speak highly of the very effective pastoral support given to all the pupils. They feel that all staff and governors take the issues that they raise seriously. Parents and pupils are regularly consulted on matters related to the school and their views are respected and valued. The school council plays a significant and positive role in the school. Pupils feel that they have a collective voice and their interests are addressed. The religious education and collective worship coordinator has a clear picture of the school's development needs and a plan of action to address them. The support for the school by the local ecumenical clergy team is making a strong contribution to the life of the school and is having an impact on spiritual development. The members of the clergy team have a good relationship with the pupils both during collective worship and during the time they regularly spend in the classrooms. The school has effective links with the diocese and ensures that staff and governors attend relevant courses, the results of which are incorporated into the life of the school. The next step for the governing body is to monitor and evaluate the impact of the daily collective worship and religious education on the pupils. The specific needs of each individual are of concern to the headteacher who very successfully integrates children from a range of backgrounds and with a range of specific needs into the school community. As a result, community cohesion is very good, children from all backgrounds and age groups work and play together in harmony.

SIAS report March 2009 Dawley Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Doseley Road North, Dawley, Telford. Shropshire TF4 3AL