

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Ducklington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Aston Road  
Ducklington  
Witney  
OX29 7US

#### **Diocese of Oxford**

LA: Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> November 2006

Date of last inspection: 2001

School's Unique reference number: 123107

Name of Headteacher: Julia Hamper

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

#### **Context**

Ducklington is a small school near the town of Witney. Half of the intake is from outside the village. Most pupils recognise that they are from advantaged homes. The majority are White British.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ducklington School as a Church of England school are good.**

This is because of the ethos of the school that promotes a truly inclusive learning environment resulting in respect, tolerance and understanding of other people and their views.

#### **Established strengths**

- The Headteacher's impact on and commitment to the ethos of the school'
- The quality of pupils attitude and behaviour
- The inclusive family learning environment.

#### **Focus for development**

- Strengthen the existing links with St. Bartholomew's church.
- Develop links with other faiths.

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

There is a clear link between Christian values that underpin school policies and the everyday routines of the school. This creates a family-like ethos that reflects an inclusive learning situation in which all are cared for, challenged and supported to achieve. This is especially so of pupils with learning difficulties from the school itself as well as those from Springfield Special school. Thus pupils acknowledge each other's talents and confidently articulate the benefits of the understanding, respect and tolerance that result from their inclusive school. Pupils and parents are justly proud of their school because of the commitment of the head and the firm and fair approach of the staff. There are high standards of behaviour and manners that have been firmly established and reinforced by the use of a variety of incentive and rewards schemes that include team points and golden time. Pupils have a good understanding of the school's code of conduct that is displayed throughout the school. They know the difference between good and poor behaviour and the consequences of their actions on other people. They are aware of the ethos of the school that allows them to make mistakes and have a new start. Although Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural opportunities are explored through cross-curricular links, artwork and focus weeks such as the 'Africa week', the best use is not made in some displays to explore the spiritual element. Throughout the school relationships are good and in addition to staff providing role models for pupils, pupils themselves are aware of being role models for younger children in school. Throughout school there are displays and artefacts to indicate the school's church status but not all pupils are able to explain the distinctiveness in Christian terms.

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

Worship is central to the promotion of the Christian ethos in this school where all are valued and achievements are recognised. It is well planned using the 'Oxfordshire Values' as themes, which are fully explored and related to Christian teachings as well as to stories from other faiths. Visitors from the church community plan and lead worship based on the relevant theme. Older pupils benefit from the responsibilities to plan and lead worship. Worship is meaningful to pupils because it is related to their personal experience and the values are often discussed in class and reinforced throughout the day. Governors have an open invitation to join in worship and provide informal evaluation in doing so. There is also further informal feedback from parents and pupils, which is used to inform development. Governors and parents attending worship also reinforces the value of worship. The younger children use familiar rituals in worship to help them appreciate the distinctive atmosphere of worship. This includes lighting a candle, which is occasionally used in whole school worship. The pupils sing enthusiastically, especially when accompanied by the pianist from church who provides a strong musical link between school and church. Thus children are able to take part in some church services. All pupils explain that worship helps them to understand other people and how to behave towards others but cannot always relate behaviour and values to religious teaching.

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

This is because of the impact of the shared vision of the headteacher in creating a secure caring learning environment that has a distinctive Christian nature. The mission statement was recently revised with input from staff, governors and parents so that there is a sense of shared ownership and commitment to the school. There is regular communication with parents who acknowledge the approachability, teamwork and commitment of the staff to providing the best opportunities for the academic and pastoral development of the pupils. The head has successfully implemented changes to the school structure to improve its effectiveness and has provided the necessary support for these to be achieved. Foundation governors are aware of their roles in school and attended diocesan training in church school self evaluation. This has ensured that their own assessment is accurate. The results of this have already prompted discussion by the active governing body. Links with the church are established but the school feels there is potential to develop these in a more creative way. The views of parents are gathered formally through questionnaires and discussions and their support for the school is strengthened by this honest open approach. Prayer has a high profile in school, being part of worship and particularly at the beginning and end of each week. Grace is said at lunchtime. The vicar and members of St Bartholomew's regularly lead worship as well as the weekly 'JAM' club. This successful club is attended by children who are church members, in addition to many with no church links. This and the shared links through music and song provide opportunities for school and church to be part of each other's lives. The church is used for festival services at Harvest and Christmas as well as a teaching resource. Pupils from other faiths share their experiences of festivals and celebrations with their peers. This has really engaged the interest of all children and the school is keen to develop this area further.