

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Dundry Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

110 Dundry Lane,
Dundry,
Bristol
BS41 8JE

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: North Somerset

Dates of inspection: 8 December 2006

Date of last inspection: 24 & 29 June 2004

School's unique reference number: 109189

Headteacher: Jenny Handford

Inspector's name and number: Jo Curd 181

School context

Dundry is a small church school on the rural outskirts of Bristol. There are currently 79 pupils aged four to eleven years on roll. Pupils come from a wide geographical area and diverse social backgrounds. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. Pupils are taught in three mixed age classes and a single year reception class. There has been a large turnover of staff recently and most, including the head teacher, have been at the school for less than four years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dundry as a Church of England school are satisfactory

The school has improved over recent years. Its effectiveness and distinctiveness as a church school has improved but remains satisfactory.

Established strengths

- All the individual pupils are valued and cared for well in this small school.
- The school meets the needs of all pupils well.

Focus for development

- To evaluate and raise the impact of all aspects of the school's Christian foundation especially its effect on pupils' learning and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- To monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning in RE, particularly completion of work and the quality of marking.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good in the way it meets the needs of all learners.

All pupils are valued and cared for well in this small school. Relationships are good and pupils are keen to share games, thoughts, news and experiences with each other and staff. Over time they are all included and made to feel particularly special at Friday's 'sharing' assembly. Pupils clearly demonstrate care and compassion to others in their school and wider community. For example, by looking after others in the playground, singing carols to the elderly and raising money for charity. At the time of the inspection all the pupils were being challenged to think of giving to others and different needs throughout the world at Christmas rather than just about presents they would like. Even the youngest pupils showed insight and empathy, for example making a Christmas prayer and wish for 'happiness and peace in the world'. Stunning views and the tranquil setting of the school clearly contribute to the pupil's obvious awe and wonder of the natural world. One pupil enthusiastically showed others some rocks she had polished. The small and very sloped school playground has been landscaped extremely imaginatively and well to provide space for pupils to run, rest and play. The emotional, social and spiritual development of pupils, especially those in Year 6, is well

supported by the Diocesan Church Links Officer. She is particularly effective in supporting their transition from this small school to their large secondary one.

The quality of Religious Education varies. Some good teaching and learning was observed during the inspection particularly using videos and in discussion. The school has started to assess Religious Education but the quality of work in books suggests that it is not always well matched to pupils' needs. Some work is clearly confused and incomplete. Studying other faiths and meeting visiting faith adherents is successfully helping pupils develop an understanding and awareness of a range of cultures, lifestyles and beliefs. Pupils spoke about practices and beliefs of Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. Although Christian music and some artefacts, including the cross in the school hall are from different cultures, understanding about the wide cultural diversity within Christianity could be further developed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

An appropriate ethos and atmosphere of Christian worship is created in whole school Acts of Collective Worship through music, a cross and a candle, which is lit during prayers. At the beginning of the week these are usually led by the vicar and at the end of the week the whole school community come together to celebrate special occasions and achievements. Pupils participate appropriately in these by acting out stories, dancing and writing prayers. Pupils generally enjoy the fairly relaxed informality of Acts of Collective Worship. They respond with respect and quiet, especially during prayer.

There are good links with the church and the Rector is a welcome visitor. Pupils greet him with familiarity and warmth. They enjoy his stories, are enthusiastic about items which he brings to show them and happily participate in and watch dramatic portrayals which he leads. They are less keen when he 'just talks' or when he repeats stories he has told already. Stories from the Bible, which he relates, clearly contribute to pupils' Religious Education and understanding about Christianity. His presence, services in the church at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and end of the school year and project work around the church all contribute to pupils' knowledge of the Anglican Church and practice. A large proportion of parents keenly attend school services in the church.

Pupils feel that Acts of Collective Worship held in age groups and classes tend to focus on news and social discussion rather than worship. An Act of Collective Worship each week is devoted to singing. As the content of collective worship is not always recorded and rarely evaluated it would be helpful to review worship in order to aid further development.

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

Over her relatively short time at the school the head teacher has effectively focussed on improving teaching and behaviour in the school and several good features were mentioned in their Ofsted inspection. Priorities to make the school effectively and distinctively Christian have taken second place and were further hindered by the resignation of the RE coordinator and the recent absence of a Diocesan Adviser. Although the effectiveness and distinctiveness of the school's Christian foundation is greater than at the time of the last inspection it remains satisfactory. Progress on the points for development raised at that time is satisfactory. Notices and documents are now headed 'Dundry C of E Primary School' but information relating to the school's Christian foundation and references within documents remain limited. Pupils are shown some diversity within Christianity through the South American cross in the school hall and the use of varying music, but this remains limited. Foundation Governors are very supportive of the school. One has recently taken responsibility for supporting and monitoring Religious Education but has not yet begun work on this. His recent attendance at a diocesan day with the head teacher was encouraging and positive for both.

There are several good elements in collective worship, Religious Education and links with the Church. However, monitoring and evaluation of the impact of these is minimal. A full review of their impact and that of other aspects of the Christian foundation will inform and assist the school in its further development as a Church School.