

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Durweston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Durweston,
Blandford,
Dorset
DT11 0QA

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Dorset

Date of inspection: Friday 13th July, 2007

Date of last inspection: 10th and 11th February, 2003

School's unique reference number: 113798

Headteacher: Mr Neil Tarchetti

Inspector's name and number: David Shears 423

School context

Durweston is a smaller than average primary school with currently 123 pupils on roll. Approximately half of the pupils are from the catchment area, comprising the three villages of Durweston, Bryanston and Stourpaine, and the remainder are brought in from a wider area. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is higher than the national average. Within the last three years the school has changed from being a first school to a primary school. The school is currently having extensive building alterations.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Durweston Primary as a Church of England school are good

Good relationships at Durweston are the key to this school's success. Pupils and teachers work together well, supporting effective learning in the classroom. There are good links with the local church and community, enriching the wider education of these maturing, independent learners. Effective leaders and managers have a vision for the school that enables it to continue to improve and develop. Pupils are nurtured carefully and are well prepared for the future.

Established strengths

Excellent personal development enables pupils to become confident, caring individuals.
Effective teaching in RE gives pupils a good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith.
Good leadership and management ensure that the school is constantly looking forward and refining its practice to improve its provision.
The local church and clergy give helpful support to enhance the Christian development of the school.

Focus for development

Continue to support pupil's spiritual development by increasing opportunities for this in all areas of the curriculum.
Ensure that collective worship is evaluated more thoroughly by staff, governors and pupils to identify specific areas of improvement.

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

Pupils at Durweston make good progress in their learning, regardless of their ability. Most say they feel safe and secure in school and enjoy their lessons. The relationships that exist between pupils and their teachers are excellent and pupils say that they are always treated fairly by the adults around them, whether they are teachers or support staff. Similarly, pupils are trusted by the adults around them. They are given special responsibilities and this helps them to become mature and confident people who care for and support each other well. When there are any issues between pupils these are quickly resolved. As one pupil remarked,

'Sometimes you think you are going to hold a grudge for ages but you don't.' Pupils talk openly about saying sorry and forgiving each other. There is a powerful sense of Christian community. The social, moral and cultural development is good throughout the whole of school life. The spiritual development of pupils is also good, particularly within RE and this now needs to extend to the rest of the school day. Displays are colourful and bright including some that show good RE development. However, with more careful thought, these and other displays from across the curriculum could extend the spiritual development of pupils further. There are some particularly effective displays that focus on pupil's emotional needs such as one about dealing with anger by giving suggestions on how to calm down and another on how to deal with bullying.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is well planned with good use of a range of resources. Most of the time the headteacher leads worship although there are opportunities for others both within and outside of school to support worship in this way. Pupils behave well and understand that this is an important part of the school day. They are given opportunities to worship through song, to pray and to reflect on what they have heard. Pupils particularly enjoy worship when they are able to participate. They like funny stories and these help them to listen more carefully. They enjoy the singing and like having the opportunity to say their own prayers, giving good opportunities for spiritual development. However, when pupils are not actively involved in worship or stories are repeated too often they listen less well and consequently do not retain what is being taught. Collective worship is monitored and evaluated although this is too short and unspecific. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint any specific areas for development. There are too few opportunities for pupils, staff or parents to evaluate whether worship is supporting their needs. This would give the school a much clearer idea of what is or is not effective and this would in turn improve future planning and provision. Pupils do have a good knowledge of the major Christian festivals and there are opportunities for them to experience worship in the church next door, where there are good links with the local rector.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Most of the pupils achieve the required standard in RE with half of this year's Y6 achieving above this. Taking the higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities into consideration, this represents good progress. All this is a result of good management and planning of the subject, coupled with very good teaching. Pupils display a very good knowledge, particularly of the main Bible stories, and they understand the main principles of the Christian faith. Lessons are planned well and taught enthusiastically by committed members of staff. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore their own ideas and feelings and they do this confidently, knowing that they will be listened to and positively accepted. They listen well to the thoughts of other pupils and adults around them and this helps them to reflect on their own beliefs and principles, comparing and adjusting them appropriately. There are good opportunities for cross curricular links with art, PSHE, drama and ICT among others. There are moments of tangible spiritual development such as when drama is used to create an electric atmosphere, bringing a Bible story to life. RE is mainly Christian in nature as is befitting a Church school, although an appropriate amount of time is spent learning about and understanding other faiths, part of their good cultural development. Pupils enjoy RE because the teachers make it interesting through fun activities and engaging videos. However, there are not enough opportunities, particularly in key stage two, for them to record learning in more detail and, in particular, how what they have learnt can apply to their own lives. This would enable marking to be more focused with insightful questions that would extend their thinking and provide more opportunities for spiritual development. Formal assessment is good with appropriate levelling and this, alongside helpful comments, is included in all reports to parents.

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

The leadership and management of the school are well organised and efficient and they ensure that there is an effective self-evaluation process in place, which is accurate in its judgements. RE, in particular, has been a priority in the school during the current year where the Dorset Agreed Syllabus has been discussed, adopted and implemented successfully. The

foundation governors have strong positive views about the Christian foundation of the school and support the headteacher well. Similarly, the headteacher has a valuable vision for the school. As these are being fused together they are beginning to provide a clear and strategic way forward. The views of other stakeholders such as parents, staff and pupils are sought well in other areas of school life but need to be included in the areas of RE, collective worship and Christian distinctiveness too. This would give the leadership and management of the school fresh insights into how others view the school from their perspective and help to move them forward. There is evidence of the Christian foundation in both documentation and in the school. In particular the specific aims for RE and collective worship are well written with clear Christian principles of faith underpinning them. The overall aims of the school would benefit from a similar review. Meetings of the governors include time for prayer and issues are discussed within a Christian context. The Christian foundation of the school is also made clear to all prospective staff prior to any appointments. There are good links with the local church and clergy, who support the school both in prayerful and in practical ways, and these are becoming increasingly effective. This strengthens the Christian foundation of the school and together enhances the Christian witness both in Durweston and beyond.

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