

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

English Bicknor Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Coleford
Gloucestershire
GL16 7PG

Diocese: Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire
Dates of inspection: 20th September 2006
Date of last inspection: Not known
School's unique reference number: 115621
Headteacher: Mr David Phillips
Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett 201

School context

English Bicknor CE VC is a very small primary school serving a wide rural community on the edge of the Forest of Dean. All the children are of white British heritage and are taught in three mixed age classes. Generally attainment on entry is comparable to the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of English Bicknor CE VC Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

The welfare of the children is at the heart of the school's mission. Christian values do support the school ethos and these are evident in the quality of relationships that exist between all members of the school community. The headteacher and governors however are committed to further strengthening the impact of Christian values on the development of the whole child.

Established strengths

- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on Christian values of care, respect and trust.
- Children possess a high level of responsibility and have a clear perception of moral and social values.
- The school uses the local environment successfully to promote a sense of wonder and stewardship.

Focus for development

- Evaluate more accurately the impact of Christian values on the development of the whole child.
- The Incumbent to support governors, staff and children in monitoring and evaluating the quality of collective worship and religious education.
- Provide more opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.
- Create closer reciprocal links between the school and church communities.

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

At the heart of the school ethos is the belief that self-esteem, carefully nurtured in each child, is an essential element of personal development. Christian values of respect, tolerance and forgiveness are evident in the quality of relationships. Children look after and treat each other with a high degree of care. They also develop a strong personal sense of themselves whilst acting with humility. This makes a school in which children are happy and where learning is enjoyable. Children say that it is friendly school in which they feel safe and secure. Adults in school provide good role models for the children because they share the same Christian values. Good teaching was seen in lessons that had a variety of tasks delivered at a pace

which kept the children motivated and engaged. At one point a class went outside to part of the school grounds and looked with considerable wonderment at a huge oak tree and the amount of life it supported. This activity generated a lot of discussion and interest about the tree as a symbol of creation. Standards in the school are generally good. Children with special educational difficulties and disabilities make particularly good progress. Raising the achievement of high attaining children is something the school has identified as an area for improvement. A gifted and talented policy is being written which will help to support the identification and development of these children. Children feel strongly that the school council gives them a voice. It was introduced last year and the children hope that they will become more involved in shaping school life as the role of the council develops.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Worship has improved recently with the introduction of the programme known as Values for Life. The weekly themes are explored in whole school worship and more intimately in smaller class groups. Children have some opportunities for quiet reflection. This was seen when the worship leader asked children to think about the uneven distribution of the world's food supply. They closed their eyes for a moment's silence giving them an opportunity for personal reflection. Although worship itself can be stimulating, its effect on the wider school is only adequate. The regular monitoring and evaluation of worship by governors, staff and children would help to identify what is needed to make worship more central to the school ethos. Children have a satisfactory attitude towards worship and particularly enjoy it when they can participate. They are involved in special services, often held at the church, but would like more opportunities for this. The Incumbent is well known to the children and leads worship regularly. Worship makes reference to the Bible and the significance of the stories is explored. Children know the Lord's Prayer and periodically make use of additional prayers from the Anglican tradition.

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

The headteacher places an emphasis on personal development and self esteem. This is shared by staff and governors and reflects the school's Christian mission. A thorough evaluation of the effect of Christian values on personal and academic development will enable the school to establish a strategic view for enriching its Christian status. Governors have a realistic understanding of this and are committed to taking the school forward. With the RE Co-ordinator they are aware that this will involve close evaluation of worship and religious education. Parents speak positively about the feel of the school and the enjoyment their children get from friendships. They are still not sure of the significance of the controlled status of their school. There are some good features, which include close links between the incumbent and the school. The pastoral support the school community receives from her and the church is particularly strong. She is committed to developing these ties and introducing some new exciting measures.

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