

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Farmborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Street,
Farmborough,
Bath
BA2 0FY

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Bath and North East Somerset

Dates of inspection: 4th June 2008

Date of last inspection: 2- 4th February 2004

School's unique reference number: 109191

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Hewett

Inspector's name and number: Susan Walker 391

School context

Farmborough Church of England Primary School is a village school catering for 90 children, 60 per cent of whom come from outside the village. Twenty-six children have special education needs, three of these having statements of special educational need. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Farmborough School as a Church of England school are good.

The headteacher is well supported by staff, governors and clergy in sustaining an ethos that has Christian values at its heart. The impact of these values is seen in the caring relationships between adults and children. It is evident in the mutually supportive relationships between school, church and community.

Established strengths

- The Christian ethos of the school in which all learners are nurtured and valued whatever their need.
- The importance given to Collective Worship for learners' spiritual and moral development.
- The positive impact of the strong relationship between school, church and community that has been developed by school leaders.

Focus for development

- Explore strategies for monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship and religious education on the everyday lives of learners
- Establish procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work in maintaining and developing its Christian distinctiveness
- Widen children's experience of a range of Christian worship
- Provide further opportunities to develop children's awareness of world faiths in this country

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

The school's status is proclaimed through Christian symbols and vibrant displays that value children's work. Children are happy and secure in school. They are valued as individuals and benefit from loving relationships between all members of the school community. Children say that they trust adults and that they are treated fairly. They express a sympathetic understanding of the problems of others less fortunate than themselves. This is because of the good range of opportunities provided for them to reflect on the needs of others, for

example in circle time and through fund raising activities. Children's social and moral development is supported through clear behaviour guidelines based on Christian values. Religious education teaching provides good support for the spiritual dimension of children's development. They are helped to relate what they learn to their everyday lives, for example to reflect on the qualities of a good leader. They are taught to ask mature questions, for example 'How does God talk back when you speak to him?' and to develop their thinking skills. Although children are taught about the beliefs and customs of faiths other than Christianity, there are no opportunities for them to visit their places of worship. Parents say that they are well informed about school events and that these are very well supported. Community lunches are organised by a governor who leads children in preparing, cooking and serving food. Members of the community join in school events, for example in its 150 year celebrations. This outstanding relationship between Church, school and community provides a role model of what it means to be a Christian in the places we live and work.

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

Collective Worship is central to the school day. Children say that they enjoy worship, especially services led by the rector and by members of the church congregation. Services in school and church give experience of different forms of Anglican worship but there are no opportunities provided for them to learn about the worship of other denominations. Children know that what they learn in worship helps them in their everyday lives, explaining that it "gives us knowledge for the future". They are given good opportunities to participate, for example through offering their own prayers during services. Older children are proud of their role in leading weekly celebration assemblies. Children's mature attitude to Worship is demonstrated in the quiet respect that they show as they enter the hall and listen to the story. Good opportunities are provided to reflect on the theme and to link it to their own lives. Children understand the purpose of prayer and talk about private prayers at home and this has a positive impact on their spiritual development. Creative opportunities are provided to help children to understand the meaning of Christian festivals, for example through a re-enactment of the Easter Story in the school garden. Workshops held in the parish church include bible readings and times for prayer and reflection as children learn about Pentecost and All Saints Day. As a result of this children have a good knowledge of the meaning and importance of these times. Worship themes are clearly planned and follow the church year. However, although governors regularly attend worship there are no procedures for monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on children's everyday lives, particularly their spiritual, moral and social development.

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

The school's Christian ethos is explicit in all its documentation. Parents say that they are aware of the Church affiliation and appreciate the Christian teaching the school provides. Foundation governors, the headteacher and the rector have established a mutually supportive relationship between church, school and the community and this is valued by parents. School leaders place great importance on listening to parents and constantly review their procedures for responding to their views. Governors visit the school regularly and are very supportive, but they have no formal procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of the school's work in developing its Christian character. The headteacher articulates a clear Christian vision for the school and she and foundation governors provide good role models. Their vision is shared by everyone in the school community and has Christian values and beliefs at its core.