

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

The Five Islands Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Secondary Base
Carn Thomas
St Mary's
TR21 0LB

Diocese: Truro

Local authority: Isles of Scilly
Dates of inspection: 1st-3rd October 2007
Date of last inspection: N/A
School's unique reference number: 133554
Headteacher: Andrew Penman
Inspector's name and number: Derek Holloway (93)

School context

The Five Islands school is a federated all age school (3-15) consisting of four former VC Church of England Schools and one Community Secondary School. This federation took place in April 2002 and this is the first denominational report on the new federated school. The school is effectively a multiple split site school separated by land and sea. The off island bases contain small numbers of pupils and are one or two teacher teaching bases. Weekly boarding provision is provided for off island secondary aged pupils. The school is the only practical educational provision for the whole of the unique community of the Isles of Scilly. The school was placed in special measures from 2002 to April 2005. The current head teacher has been in post since September 2005.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the Five islands school as a Church of England school are good

The strong focus of the school in treating all students as individuals through a commitment to personalized learning, the Federated Enrichment Programme and its approach to SEN means that the meeting of the needs of all learners as unique individuals is a strength of the school. The school is very sensitive to the need to be inclusive of its uniquely isolated community. This has meant that whilst moral and social values are clear the school's spiritual values are more implicit. The Five Islands Schools foundation governors have had limited involvement in Church school self evaluation and now need to be more fully drawn into this process.

Established strengths

- The strong focus of the school in treating all students as individuals through a commitment to personalized learning
- The way the school has sought every opportunity to meet the cultural needs of their learners in this isolated community
- The leadership of the current head teacher in developing a process to explore the Church school status of this recently federated school.

Focus for development

- Building on the creative work already done in developing global awareness, explore ways to make the most of the current and future school environment to encourage opportunities for spiritual development.
- Develop effective systems for the monitoring, evaluation and development of collective worship at all phases and bases.
- Ensure that Foundation governors receive opportunities for suitable INSET to enable them to effectively fulfil their role in helping to clarify the school's vision as a Church school.

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

Evidence from the Ofsted Inspection report of 2007 supports the view gained from talking to pupils that all learners feel valued and special. Relationships between staff and pupils were observed to be strong based on mutual respect, pupils like the school and they feel 'everyone gets along well'. Pupils feel their views are taken seriously. When conflicts and problems occur pupils feel these are dealt with fairly.

Staff, under the effective leadership of the schools Global Education coordinator, have sought every opportunity to meet the cultural needs of their learners in this isolated community with, for example, visits from an Indian dance company and an African drummer. These events have often been extended to become whole community events effectively meeting a specific need of all learners in this school.

The school has been well supported by local Anglican and Methodist ministers who lead worship in all bases. On the off island bases in particular, the links between the school and the church are strong with festivals, such as Harvest and Christingle, being community events. The school choir has sung in the local church and is taking part in a choral competition in Truro Cathedral. This is an effective way of using the Christian character of the school to provide extra opportunities for pupils.

Church school status is embedded in the school's mission statement and this is made clear in the school's prospectus. Students are comfortable with the school's status and don't feel under any religious compulsion from being in a Church school.

With the help of the National Society the school has identified an approach to developing spirituality that both builds on the existing values of the disparate parts of the recently federated school community and has the potential to more effectively meet the spiritual needs of all the school learners. This has yet to be embedded in the ethos of the school and opportunities for spiritual development of pupils are consequently missed.

Much work has been done to upgrade the off island Primary bases. The Secondary base on St Mary's is currently less suitable to creating an environment that encourages spiritual development; in particular the main hall used for worship in the secondary base.

The school has developed a costed Church school development plan to address these issues as a result of its own self evaluation.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is Satisfactory

Worship is a regular part of school life and the school meets its statutory requirements for collective worship at KS1 and 2 and on four days out of five at KS 3 and 4. The school has recognised some of the weaknesses in current provision and has a well considered and costed Church School Development plan to develop the impact of collective worship in the school.

Students in the primary bases are positive about the experience of collective worship.

Primary age children spoke with enthusiasm about worship and could recall specific examples of worship they found interesting and helpful. In worship observed they took full part and responded appropriately. Older key stage 2 children particularly value the opportunity for silence that is a feature of worship. Although in the Primary Bases planning and recording of collective worship is in place as yet processes for evaluating worship have not been developed. The Primary Bases are starting to make use of SEAL materials linked to Diocesan guidance. In one of the off Island bases pupils plan and lead worship one day a week. This is an example of good practice.

In the secondary base worship is planned by individuals, including those from the local church, in isolation and this can lead to a repetition that the pupils notice. Students enjoy worship when it contains a strong visual element. There is no practice of recording, monitoring or evaluating collective worship in the secondary base and this is limiting the positive impact of worship.

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

The Head teacher and Senior staff have provided clear and practical leadership as the school explores what it means to be a church school. The school is now actively exploring ways of developing its understanding of itself as Church school with a programme of INSET utilizing National Society and Diocesan support.

The foundation governors have not been involved in the schools evaluation of itself as a Church school and have not received support in understanding their role. This has limited their effectiveness in supporting the school on its journey since federation.

The school leadership team have brought about improvement in the quality of provision for RE. There is a costed development plan in place for RE as part of the Church school improvement plan. Standards in Religious Education have been historically low in the school. Since September 2007 the school has revised the Curriculum at KS1-2 based on the Surrey Agreed Syllabus. The school is seeking to reflect the local Christian traditions through involvement in a nationally funded project to develop units of work on RE in island communities. These measures are an appropriate way to make use of the expertise of one of the island base leaders and have the potential to significantly raise standards in RE. The situation at KS3 is less clear. Standards in RE remain identified as below those of other subject at KS4. The subject has been adversely affected by staff turnover. The school's management team has now stabilized this situation and plans are in place to address these issues.

The monitoring and evaluating of Collective worship has not been a focus for the school but there is provision in the Church school improvement plan to begin to address this.