

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Goring Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Wallingford Road  
Goring-on-Thames  
Reading  
RG8 0BG

#### Diocese of Oxford

LA: Oxfordshire

Date of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2007

Date of last inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> November 1999

School's Unique reference number: 123201

Name of Headteacher: Michael Turner

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Lyn Field NS151

#### Context

This is an average sized school and serves the village of Goring and the surrounding area. The children are almost all White British from a mixture of social backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Goring Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The Church has a very positive presence in the school and this strengthens the commitment to the Christian ethos. The school is valued for the way it shapes the moral development of pupils and this comes from the respect shown in relationships throughout the school.

#### Established strengths

- The church and school are united in recognising the importance of Christian teaching in the life of the school
- The RE co-ordinator is instrumental in raising the profile and standards of RE
- Pupils show respect and sensitivity in their relationships and behaviour

#### Focus for development

- To ensure all groups contribute to the broad evaluation of the school as a church school focusing on the impact of Christian values on the achievement and personal development of pupils

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

Pupils act responsibly and with sensitivity towards each other. They are confident that any problems will be resolved and willingly discuss concerns with their teachers. Relationships are based on trust and openness and children learn from the models of the adults in school. The impact of this is seen when pupils have different opinions because they have the confidence to offer opposing views whilst listening attentively to what others say. Lessons in RE reinforce this in the context of faith and pupils feel that inside the school, there is open discussion and 'you cannot be hurt because of what you believe'. They understand that Christian teaching underpins what is expected in behaviour but some find it difficult to make the links between these values and the personal qualities they want to develop. Pupils make a strong contribution to the community. In school they are clear about the role of both the School Council and the Healthy Schools Group and know that it is important to take all views into account. They understand that some responsibilities bring public acknowledgement whilst others require loyal commitment over a long period of time. Joint activities with the church enable them to play an active role in their local community.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

The clergy team makes a significant contribution through its involvement in the planning and leadership of worship. The vicar and curate have a regular presence in the school and have established good relationships with pupils which creates positive attitudes to worship. This means that the questions posed in worship are often challenging and have helped pupils develop a good understanding of symbols and key Christian beliefs that supports their progress in RE lessons. The themes chosen follow the pattern of festivals in the church year and pupils understand how they recall events in the life of Christ. There are not, however, consistent links being made between the curriculum and worship and this limits the opportunities for pupils to use their own work to enhance the themes. The headteacher allocates a significant amount of time each day to collective worship and this reflects its importance in the life of the school. Children value this time for coming together and recognise the role it plays in reinforcing the school's emphasis on the Christian teaching about 'treating others as you would wish to be treated'. Some children appreciate the time of reflection to ponder some of the big questions in life but others do not make the best use of the time because they need more help to structure and express their thoughts in more spiritual language. This matches the outcomes of the RE evaluation but has yet to be explored because the group that meets to plan worship does not have the wider brief to consider the part worship plays in the broad development of children.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Children's knowledge of Christianity is good because teachers use effective strategies that have worked in other subjects. Children in Y6 know how the Bible came to be written and understand there may be different interpretations. In Y2 they already begin to grapple with difficult concepts such as the Trinity. They have very positive attitudes to RE and can see the wider benefits of the subject. Children explain that it is important to understand the different ways in which belief is expressed and the different practices that exist even between Christian denominations.

The co-ordinator has been instrumental in raising the profile of RE and building the confidence of staff. She has clear evidence that standards are above average in each year group and can identify how the quality of teaching contributes to these. The focus on planning at different levels so that children make progress in their learning has been successful. It is clear, in teaching about Christmas for example, that children in Y4 have a more advanced grasp of key Christian beliefs than they did in Y1. The co-ordinator has carried out the most comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation but in touching on so many different elements it has been difficult to draw any firm conclusions about any single aspect of teaching and learning. The school is aware that a consistent focus for evaluation will help to identify exactly where change is needed.

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

The church sees the school as an integral part of its community. Key members of the church and the vicar in particular make a significant contribution to the leadership of the school. This has an impact on children's experience of worship and the part they play in the local community. It ensures that decisions at governor level always reflect the Christian foundation of the school particularly in the appointment of staff. The headteacher has a clear vision for how the Christian teaching of 'loving your neighbour as yourself' permeates relationships and behaviour in the daily life of the school. He allocates roles to his staff that give them a voice in shaping the ethos of the school. Their individual contributions to the worship and church liaison groups certainly sustain the Christian ethos. As groups, however, they do not make as big an impact on improvement as a church school as they might because they are too focused on planning and do not have the brief to take a broader and more evaluative view of the school's impact on pupils.

Parents support the school's church foundation and value the presence of the clergy. They feel that the school gives children a good understanding of religious faith and a set of values as a basis for their moral development.