

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Great Kingshill Combined Church of England Voluntary Aided School,

Cryers Hill Road,
Great Kingshill,
High Wycombe,
HP15 6JP

Diocese of Oxford

Local Authority: Buckinghamshire

Date of inspection: 4.12.2007

Date of last inspection: 6.5.2002

School's Unique reference number: 110431

Name of Headteacher: Mr. R. Dodds

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Mr. R. Miller

Context

This is a large primary school in a semi-rural area. It received Voluntary Aided status in 2002. There are 406 pupils on roll of which nearly two thirds live outside the catchment area. Around 10 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and a similar number have learning difficulties and disabilities. The head teacher took up his post in 1984.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Kingshill as a Church of England school are good

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Kingshill Combined as a Church of England School are good. The mission statement is rooted in respect for each other and the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's high expectations of all its staff and pupils are promoted throughout the school. The capacity to make the necessary improvements is good.

Established strengths

- The way in which the school environment is used to encourage spiritual development.
- The positive attitude of learners towards their learning in religious education [RE].
- The manner in which the headteacher and foundation governors promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school.

Focus for development

- Develop assessment procedures for RE in order to ensure all pupils make appropriate progress.
- Involve pupils and staff more in the planning and delivery of acts of collective worship.
- Include views of parents, children and governors in the evaluation process for worship.

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

Great Kingshill is a happy, caring school where the staff and foundation governors act as excellent role models, based on their Christian principles. Children say staff have high expectations of them. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those from a minority ethnic background are well cared for and supported, as they seek, with all other pupils, to fulfil their potential. The Christian identity in the school is evident as you walk through the entrance, where the school prayer board is displayed and well used. Christian artefacts are visible throughout the school and pupils say they add to the school's Christian purpose. The school listens to and actively encourages individual pupil's ideas, as well as through the school council. This has led to the introduction of a Year 3 girl's suggestion of a "God club". This has brought the church youth worker closer to the pupils. These aspects enhance both the ethos and identity of the school as well as impacting on the excellent provision for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Acts of collective worship are an important part of school life. The hall is transformed for this purpose with a lighted candle as a focal point. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Live music accompanies the singing of hymns that everyone in attendance enjoys. A permanent cross adorns the wall. Pupils say that when they sing hymns, they gain inspiration and it makes them feel better. Pupils say that worship teaches and helps them to pray. They enjoy being able to take part in re-enactments of Gospel stories but have insufficient opportunities to plan and deliver acts of worship themselves. The older pupils know and understand the Lord's prayer. Worship makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, by making them reflect on the issues of the day and think more deeply about their relationships with each other and the wider world. Pupils also have a period of reflection after lunch and before the commencement of the afternoon session. They also speak or sing a prayer before lunch, which seals the required atmosphere for the meal. The vicar from the parish church leads worship on one day each fortnight and a church youth worker is a regular visitor. They are both loved and respected by the pupils who look forward to their visits with great anticipation. Worship is planned and co-ordinated by the headteacher. As yet no formal evaluation involving staff, visiting governors, parents and pupils, is in place, to ensure that the impact of worship is as positive as it can be.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of RE and the teaching of the subject is good. The schemes of work have been recently updated in line with The Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus and reflect the school's Christian foundation at the same time as giving due weight to other faiths. The RE co-ordinator has undertaken professional development in RE and disseminates the information to other staff and then monitor's progress at the end of each unit taught. One pupil said, "RE helps us to live in an increasingly multi-cultural society and helps prevent racism". The use of interactive white boards in religious education also makes the subject interesting and stimulating. A Year 6 class teacher used this media when presenting "Creation according to Islam". Teachers give very good guidance to pupils on how to improve their written work. Pupils do not however have sufficient opportunities to reflect on their work and carry out self-assessment to know how well they are progressing. From Year 1 children begin to understand Christian symbols and artefacts. Older pupils understand signs and symbols of other faiths such as Islam. The school is currently developing formal criteria on which to base its own assessment of pupils' learning and confirm their levels of attainment in an effort to raise standards still further. Encouraging the link between religious belief and their daily life is just one example of how RE in the school makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

The quality of the leadership of the head teacher and foundation governors, contributes significantly to the success of the school. They promote the Christian vision for the school, by treating staff and children alike with a loving and caring attitude. This is reflected in the excellent behaviour and attitudes of children. The school staff work closely as a team and they receive strong support from its leaders. The school's management team and governors are establishing clear systems that inform the school's self-evaluation process. The areas identified for school improvement are accurate and include aspects that continue to maintain the Christian dimension of the school's life. Foundation governors have a monitoring role for acts of collective worship and RE and this is being formalised to feed into the evaluation process. Parents speak very highly of all that the school does to ensure their children flourish as individuals. Links between the school and the PCC are good. The local Church is used for some school events and as a learning resource.