

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Holsworthy Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,**

Sanders Lane,

Holsworthy,

Devon,

EX22 6HD

#### **Diocese: Exeter**

Local authority: Devon

Date of inspection: Thursday September 13<sup>th</sup> 2007

Date of last inspection: February 2002

School's unique reference number: 113379

Headteacher: Mr. Alan Muller

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Jenny Pestrige (153)

#### **School context**

The majority of the 267 learners are White British and are from Holsworthy. The school was moved to a new site and building on the edge of the town in 2000. There are an average number of learners with learning disabilities.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holsworthy Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory.**

The school, in partnership with the Church, is in the process of reviewing its Christian ethos, as expressed through acts of worship and across the whole curriculum. Its care for the needs of all learners, and the celebration of learning using the creative arts, are an expression of the school's approach to its Church of England foundation.

#### **Established strengths**

- A commitment by the senior management team to review and develop the Christian distinctiveness of the school, following the recent survey findings.
- The level of care given to learners with special educational needs through the 'special classes' strategy in Years 3/4 and 5/6.
- The quality of religious education displays in classrooms and public areas, which provide good opportunities for spiritual development.

#### **Focus for development**

- Review and develop the overall Christian distinctiveness and values of the school, with a particular emphasis on the Mission Statement and aims, and the policies for collective worship and religious education.
- Introduce the regular use of prayer, reflection and artefacts in every act of collective worship.
- Ensure that some staff are always present at all acts of worship, and provide an opportunity for staff retreat / quiet days.

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

Learners are confident, articulate and have well-developed social skills. This results in the good behaviour of learners. They enjoy talking about their school and are also able to express their views on ultimate life questions, such as how the world was created, and what happens when we die. This is as a result of the good contribution that religious education is making to the Christian distinctiveness of the school. There are some examples of outstanding practice, as seen in displays and in teaching in both Key Stages. The subject is led by the religious education co-coordinator with enthusiasm and rigour. Learners say that their lessons are “never boring” and that it is “a nice community where you can feel safe”. Learners are thoughtful and caring, which is an indication of the school's emphasis on respect and compassion for each individual. Relationships in the school are good, as summarised by one learner; “this is a very friendly and co-operative school”. The provision of care for learners with special educational needs is good, and the initiative of special classes for learners in Years 3/4 and 5/6 is resulting in good progress, with reference to learners' academic, emotional and social development. The good quality of displays in the school, with some examples of outstanding practice, celebrates the wonder of creation and the excitement of learning. Therefore, these displays are providing good opportunities for spiritual awareness. The school has identified the outdoor environment for review and development, as currently it does not provide imaginative, creative features or structures to enhance spiritual and social development. The new school council are enthusiastic about their involvement in these developments, which is a good example of learner participation.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.**

Learners generally enjoy collective worship. They particularly comment on their enjoyment of the weekly visits by the Vicar, “he is very exciting when he talks.” These talks are making an impact on learners and they remember a wide range of Bible stories. Learners are able to explain why they enjoy singing in worship, and how it affects how they feel. The hall contains a small cross on the wall and appropriate religious education displays. These help to re-inforce a special atmosphere in the hall for learners. Monitoring and evaluation, undertaken in the summer term, has outlined issues within collective worship. Limited use is made of specific artefacts as a focus, which is therefore a missed opportunity to promote spiritual development. Long-term plans for collective worship themes are in the early stages of development. The survey by the foundation link governor has identified that prayer is only a regular feature of those acts of worship led by the Vicar. The senior management team acknowledge the outcomes of the survey in their self-evaluation of the school. However, the resulting impact of action taken, based on the survey, is not yet firmly part of school practice. Members of staff only attend those acts of worship involving the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) material, and other special assemblies. No members of staff, apart from the Headteacher, are regularly present during the weekly visits from the Vicar. The survey quoted the views of learners who emphasised their understanding that acts of collective worship are an opportunity “to get together as a community”. They also state that it is important to have assemblies, “to stand as a team together”. However, the whole “team” is not currently present on a regular basis. This means that the Christian distinctiveness of the school, as a worshipping community, is under-developed.

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

The strong leadership of the Headteacher has raised standards and parents consider that

theSchool is becoming the school of choice for learners out of the immediate area. The partnership with the local community is effective, and parents are happy with the current level of involvement with their children's learning. There is good parental satisfaction with the care offered by the school. The partnership with the Church supports the religious education curriculum and the collective worship programme, and is making a major contribution to the learners' spiritual growth. The contribution made by the Vicar and the link foundation governor to developing the Christian distinctiveness of the school, is significant. This input, coupled with the delivery of the religious education programme, is making a positive impact on the lives of learners. However, there are several central leadership and management issues, which are affecting the overall Christian distinctiveness of the school. The school policies currently contain no reference to the Church of England foundation of the school, and the title of the school is frequently used without an acknowledgement of its religious character. There is no process for monitoring and evaluating the overall Christian ethos of the school. The school has not yet identified specific Christian values, nor organised any recent training on Church school ethos. There is no provision for the spiritual development of staff, either through in service training or in staff presence at acts of collective worship. The reference to the school's Christian foundation is not sufficiently clear in the current aims and objectives. All of these factors indicate that in some aspects of the life of the school, there are limited explicit references made to the school's Christian distinctiveness. The senior management team have identified the need to review and re-define the school's Christian ethos.

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