

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Holy Apostles' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Battledown Approach,
Charlton Kings,
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
L52 6QZ

Diocese of Gloucester

Gloucestershire LA

Date of inspection 4 July 2007

Date of last inspection: 10 January 2003

School's Unique reference number 115679

Name of Headteacher: Gareth Davies

Inspector: Amanda Swift 354

Context

Holy Apostles' is a smaller than average Primary School. Most children start school with above average attainment and the proportion of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and few are eligible for free school meals. The school has experienced significant staffing changes over recent years.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Apostles' Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Holy Apostles' Primary School is an outstanding Church of England school. It provides a quality education underpinned by a Christian vision for the twenty first century. It welcomes families into the partnership between school and church and has good capacity to improve both the achievement and life experience of all its constituents. Holy Apostles' pursues its goals with clarity, persistence and energy, quick to identify opportunities and overcome barriers. The impact upon children, parents and staff is positive and is summed up by one child's comment, 'When we prayed to God this morning his spirit came close to us'.

Established strengths

- As a result of outstanding strategic leadership and management, this school maximises its capacity to improve the life experience and achievement of the children.
- Because leaders value, and are proud of, the school's Christian foundation, the priority given to its distinctiveness is high and consequently permeates all aspects of school life.
- Because the school champions explicit links with the local church, it is connected with and rooted in its community.
- Children speak enthusiastically about collective worship which has a powerful, positive impact upon their spiritual development.

Focus for development

- Develop the evaluation and monitoring of Religious Education.
- Ensure both summative assessment and assessment for learning are developed and consistent in religious education.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, outstandingly meets the needs of all the learners.

Standards and achievement at Holy Apostles' School are high. The value added by the schools' Christian foundation is outstanding. Progress in knowledge, understanding and skills are excellent because children are supported and challenged by teachers with high expectations. The school uses shared Christian values to promote compassion, collaborative learning and sensitivity to others feelings. Children are encouraged to develop independence and confidence. This was exemplified during a session on Joseph where year two pupils re-told the story with style using only visual prompts. The task was a challenge, motivation levels were high and the outcomes were excellent.

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

Children enjoy collective worship. They describe assembly as a part of school life they enjoy the most, 'I like learning about God; if you learn about God he will treasure you'. Many elements unite to create the power of collective worship at Holy Apostles'; the dynamic shared leadership of the school and church, the understanding that assemblies are best when they are interactive and fun yet also reflective and relevant, the consistent message that God is everywhere. These factors combine to create a strong spiritual experience for everyone. It was a pleasure to observe children and staff as they joined in worship and learned that they are the living church, each one with a part to play. Because the school makes effective use of visitors such as charity representatives to lead worship the children recognise their role in the global community.

Religious Education is good at Holy Apostles' School.

Because teaching and learning is secure Religious Education has a positive impact upon children and they make good progress. Planning is detailed reflecting the agreed syllabus and current thinking about preferred learning styles. The vast majority of children enjoy Religious Education and demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills when expressing their belief. Assessment is at an embryonic stage of development. The leader for Religious Education has a clear vision and plans to realise it and to include the use of assessment data to inform planning and target setting. Written feedback to children does not always relate effectively to the learning objective and therefore some children do not move forward sufficiently in their learning.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding.

Leadership and management are the single most important factor contributing to the distinctiveness and effectiveness of this outstanding school. The headteacher and governors form a cohesive team, perceptive and aspiring for the children and their families. They have developed a quality learning environment, recruited a team of teachers with high expectations and a shared vision of the schools' Christian foundation. Evaluation is systematic and rigorous and professional development is integrated with the schools aims. Standards are high and the impact of Religious Education and collective worship is positive. The challenge for the strategic leaders lies in determining how this highly successful school can continue to develop, improve and enhance its vision.