

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Kingsdon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kingsdon,
Somerset,
TA11 7JX

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 11th June 2007

Date of last inspection: June 2003

School's unique reference number: 123765

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Dawson

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jennifer E Pestridge (153)

School context

This small rural school is situated in the centre of the village. The size of the school, currently 20 learners, means that the Headteacher and governors are currently considering collaboration with a view to federation with another Voluntary Aided Church of England school in the vicinity. This is in line with the Area Planning Review by the Local Authority. Local housing is expensive, and the age profile of the village population reflects this fact.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kingsdon Church of England Primary School are good.

The school has a caring, family ethos, based on a partnership between the school, the Church and the home. The school challenges learners to reach their potential, in a creative Christian environment.

Established strengths

- The Christian ethos of the school, which is providing an effective, nurturing community, where all relationships are mutually supportive.
- The opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum.
The quality of acts of collective worship.

Focus for development

- Summarise the recent initiatives in the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship, stating these formally in the policy. Also, revise the introductory paragraphs in the policy for collective worship, so that they reflect more fully the Christian foundation and current practice of the school.
- Develop a strategy for monitoring the overall impact of the Christian ethos of the school, in the lives of learners, over time.
- Create an area for quiet reflection in the outdoor environment.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in the way it meets the needs of all learners.

All learners feel valued and cared for, including those with special educational needs. The care given to a child with a physical disability by all staff, and by other learners, reflects the ethos of the school. Christian values are resulting in learners developing sensitivity and care for local, national and international issues. Learners say that teachers make learning fun and also, "teachers ask questions, which make us think". There are well-developed links between the school, the village and the Church community, as seen in the organisation of the Lenten Lunch in the Village Hall. These links help to reinforce the sense of family community for learners. There are good opportunities for cultural development in the curriculum and in themed and multi-cultural weeks. Learners are proud of their creative achievements, for example during a 'Mexican Day' and when learning about the way of life of Aztecs. In Key

Stage 1 the quality of display encourages the enjoyment of learning. The displays on creation and special books reinforce the Christian foundation of the school. Opportunities for spiritual development overall are good, with examples of outstanding practice. There are outstanding examples of opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum, in both Key stages. This was seen in Key Stage 1 in a lesson on Judaism, and in Key Stage 2 in a science lesson. The focus on feelings when looking at and examining rocks emphasised a sense of awe and wonder. In written work, poetry using similes, on the subject of 'Jesus heals the blind man' is outstanding. Relationships in the school are outstanding, as they are enabling learners to put the needs of each other first. Whilst the needs of the individual are met, there is an emphasis on the well being of the community. Parents endorse this ethos. One parent stated that she did not think her son, "could receive a better education; he has blossomed". "We feel privileged at the level of education at this school". There is currently no explicit area provided for quiet reflection in the outdoor environment. Explicit Christian symbols and artefacts are visible in classrooms and in the foyer, which clearly emphasise the Christian foundation of the school.

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

Learners are enthusiastic about collective worship, and enjoy participating. The quality of the act of worship observed was outstanding. The use of appropriate visual aids, learner participation, reflection, prayer and singing all indicate a genuine enjoyment of worship by the community. Learners have a good understanding of key Christian festivals and the links with the Church are evident in the services held on these occasions. Anglican faith and practice are also expressed through units of work in religious education, resulting in a good level of knowledge regarding key Christian beliefs. This is supplemented by experiences such as the writing of books of prayers by learners. The level of planning and organisation of both whole school and class worship is good. The 'introduction' and the 'rationale' sections of the policy do not reflect fully the Christian foundation of the school, or its practice. The recent initiatives regarding the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship are not yet summarised in the policy which it would be helpful to update in the light of current practice. The links with the Church, established by the recently retired Vicar, will be maintained by members of the Church, and overseen by the priest in charge. This is an example of the strong partnership with the whole Church community.

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

The Headteacher and governors have a clear concept of the vision of the school as providing a caring, Christian ethos, which reflects its Church of England foundation. The impact of the leadership of the school is resulting in an enriched curriculum, where prayer is encouraged and where learners are given regular opportunities to reflect on their learning. The partnership between the school, the Church and the home is emphasised, and this is resulting in the warm, friendly and caring atmosphere in the school. The school is highly regarded by parents, who endorse the approach to "teach to the learners' ability, not to tests", as expressed by one parent. Parents feel both included and involved in the life of the school. There is currently no formal process for monitoring or evaluating the overall Christian ethos of the school, including collective worship and opportunities for spiritual development. The proactive initiative regarding collaboration and then federation with another Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School reflects the vision and commitment of the leadership and management, to continue and develop the provision of Church school education in the area.