

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Kintbury St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Gainsborough Street

Kintbury

Oxon

RG17 9XN

Diocese of Oxford

LA: Oxford

Dates of inspection: 12th. December 2006

Date of last inspection: 12/11/2001

School's Unique reference number: 10997

Name of Headteacher: Barbara O'Dwyer

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Alan Thornsby NSIN 137

Context

Kintbury St Mary's is a small village school near to the town of Hungerford. The present headteacher, whose vision and commitment have been instrumental in the school's secure improvement, is leaving at the end of term.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kintbury St Mary's as a Church of England school are good.

The vision and commitment of the head, shared by staff and governors, provides a learning environment that promotes Christian values in action. Pupils are given challenge and support to achieve academically and personally. They are very aware of the values of respect and tolerance of other people and themselves. They are well-behaved, confident and articulate children.

Established strengths

- Commitment and determination of the headteacher in providing a highly effective learning environment for all pupils.
- The practical implementation of Christian values in action.
- The quality of the personal development of the pupils

Focus for development

- Give pupils further opportunities for prayer and reflection through use of prayer corners
- Use the evaluation of church school distinctiveness to inform the school improvement plan.

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

This is because of the ethos of the school in which Christian values are clearly seen in action. This has established a caring, family like atmosphere where all are valued and supported as individuals. Relationships throughout school, based on fairness and fun, are excellent and all adults are role models that children follow. This was displayed in the whole school Christmas lunch, when pupils were served by staff and parents before receiving a gift from Father Christmas. Their respect and positive attitudes to learning showed in their excellent behaviour when they came back into class after an exciting lunchtime and immediately settled to afternoon school. Staff have high expectations of pupil behaviour and achievement and have created a challenging and fun learning environment that is enjoyed by pupils. This results in pupils taking responsibility for themselves as well as for other people. Pupils rewrote the schools mission statement in language accessible to themselves which is displayed in the entrance so that visitors may see 'what makes our school special.' They are very aware of the school's code of conduct that is displayed in every classroom. The value of the friendship bench as well as healthy food and lifestyles in the school are clear evidence of how well the code works. The youngest children can successfully explain their role as 'friend for the day'. Achievements are recognised in a weekly assembly as well as immediate recognition by adults in school.

Y6 children have the responsibility of researching and campaigning for a charity that is the focus of fundraising for the year. The whole school are involved in the final choice. This gives pupils a good understanding of the purpose of fundraising as well as a commitment to help others. The rich curriculum enhances the quality of spiritual, moral social and cultural development, especially delivered through art and music and cross-curricular theme weeks. Collective worship and Religious education are vital elements in the school providing opportunities for pupils to explore and tackle big questions in both worship and classroom discussion. The cross, made by a local potter, a range of affirming posters, RE and multicultural displays and prominent prayers, enhance the distinctive character of the school and its Christian values.

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

This is because of the value placed on worship by the whole school community and the manner in which it promotes an ethos of respect and tolerance of other people and their faiths and cultures. Themes are well planned and made relevant to the age and experience of the pupils. There is regular evaluation of worship by staff that informs future planning. Worship is led by a range of adults including the rector on a weekly basis. Pupils take responsibility for the organisation of worship in the hall and have opportunities to contribute to worship by offering answers, role-play and sharing prayers. Pupils talk with confidence about the value of learning moral values and how to live by listening and talking about stories from the Bible and other sources. They have a good understanding of the Christmas story and its relevance today. Pupils are aware of the special time of worship, conducting themselves in a respectful manner. They enjoy singing, learning the meanings of songs in their weekly 'Praise through singing.' This was well illustrated by the reception child who enthusiastically exclaimed 'I like that one' as a song was announced.

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

The headteacher has successfully developed a distinctive church school community that enjoys being a part of the wider village community. This has resulted in villagers and former pupils having pride in and respect for the school and its values. This is a central part of the headteacher's vision for the school. There is good communication with parents, who are aware of the commitment of the headteacher and its impact on their children. Parents and pupils have confidence in members of staff and know that when issues are raised they are quickly and fairly resolved. Although prayer and reflection have high profiles in school there are no dedicated areas to give a focus for personal prayer or reflection during the day. Foundation governors are aware of their roles within school and are active critical friends in school development. Although the school's self-evaluation of its distinctiveness is largely accurate, it does not feed into the School Improvement Plan. There are good links with the church, the rector leading worship on a weekly basis, and the newly appointed vicar providing enthusiastic support for the school in a variety of ways. She has carried out a role-play baptism as well as teaching about Harvest and making Christingles for pupils to bring to church. Pupils' awareness and understanding of other faiths is furthered by visits from Buddhist monks, a Hindu member of staff and regular visits to a synagogue and a local catholic retreat. The school has a PTA that is active in fundraising and in joint events with the church and village such as May day celebrations. The school enjoys support from local businesses, who often match funds raised with donations.