

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Long Wittenham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street
Long Wittenham
Oxfordshire
OX14 4QJ

Diocese of Oxford

LA : Oxfordshire

Dates of inspection: 21 September 2006

Date of last inspection:

School's Unique reference number: 123153

Name of Headteacher: Mr Tim Coulson

Inspector's name and NS inspector's number: Mrs Rosemary Bartlett NS 120

Context

Long Wittenham Church of England School is a small school serving its village community, and with a third of its pupils coming from outside the catchment area. The buildings are well cared for and the school has developed the pupils' outdoor play areas creatively within recent years. The school will celebrate its 150th anniversary next year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Long Wittenham as a Church of England school are good.

The Christian ethos of the school is clearly evident. Christian values underpin the school's well developed pastoral care and its high expectations for the pupils. The headteacher and governors have a well formulated vision for the school's future.

Established strengths

- The uniqueness and value of each person are recognised and celebrated
- Music contributes richly to school life
- The school has a creative approach to teaching and learning

Focus for development

- Review the content and context for worship
- Strengthen the links between the school and the church
- Enrich the RE curriculum through visits to places of worship

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

The school's Christian values have a positive impact on pupils' perceptions of themselves and of their potential. The extent to which pupils feel valued and special is excellent. They say that "being at school has helped me find out what I am good at". Pupils are confident and friendly. The school's imaginative approach to learning includes a "stools growing project". Seeds of woody stems are planted in groups of three. These, over a period of a few years, become the legs of stools. Their growth is carefully monitored. Through this, pupils gain a sense of the wonder of life and the potential of creativity. Music plays a large part in school life. The school has fruitful links with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Pupils' artwork is well displayed around the school. Pupils derive enjoyment and inspiration from music and art. They animatedly discuss their pictures informally during lunch breaks. They are attentive to each other's achievements. The school meets pupils' special needs fully and creatively. Pupils respond enthusiastically to religious education. The school judges that pupils would benefit from an increase in visits to places of worship.

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

School worship takes place within the context of daily assemblies. Themes for worship are based on the school's cycle of Values. These are further developed across the curriculum.

They contribute well to pupils' personal and social awareness. Music for worship is well planned and prepared. This is well reflected in the quality of pupils' singing and in their enjoyment of it. Pupils speak confidently as they introduce the preparations for the harvest festival in support of World Vision. However, despite their own contributions, and their enjoyment of the music, they do not express particular interest in worship. In answer to the question "Why do we pray?" they respond "Because this is a church school". The school is developing an approach to evaluating worship and judges that more focus is required on both the content and context for worship. The school therefore plans to provide inservice training for staff in leading worship. School worship is held once a term in the parish church. Pupils are familiar with the Lord's Prayer and in religious education they learn about the Eucharist. Collective worship encourages pupils to reflect on their aspirations and achievements. The importance of this is reflected in the "tree of encouragement" that is displayed near the school entrance.

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

The school has a clearly inclusive Christian spirit. The headteacher, senior management and governors have a clear view of the school's progress in achieving its vision. The headteacher's effective leadership is reflected in the collaborative team work of the staff. Staff feel valued. Their expertise is recognised and maximised. Pupils feel secure and confident in the consistent, fair structures for behaviour. There is a sense of positive purposefulness across the school. Relationships are based on respect. The school's Church of England status is made evident in displays which include the Mission statement at the entrance and a simple wooden cross in the hall. Religious education is well taught overall with examples of excellent practice in the Foundation stage. The school judges that pupils will benefit from first hand experience of a greater variety of places of worship. It therefore plans to enrich the RE curriculum through an increase in the number of visits. The school regularly seeks feedback from parents and follows this up with action as appropriate. The headteacher and governors are committed to good links with the Church. Local clergy provide support for both worship and RE. The school looks forward to the arrival of the new associate vicar and plans to strengthen its links with the parish church.