

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Lydiard Millicent Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Butts
Lydiard Millicent
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN5 3UR

Diocese: Bristol

Local authority: Wiltshire
Dates of inspection: 26th March 2008
Date of last inspection: March 2003
School's unique reference number: 126337
Headteacher: Mrs Carol Dougill
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Daphne Spitzer 37

School context

Lydiard Millicent Church of England Primary School is a popular school with 209 pupils on roll, set in an attractive rural location close to the town of Swindon. The accommodation is housed in several separate buildings, one of which is across the road from the others. The majority of pupils are from white British families with a small group from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds. The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2006.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lydiard Millicent as a Church of England school are good

The new headteacher has worked tirelessly to raise the profile of the school's Christian foundation and achieved much in a short time. She provides a strong vision and models Christian caring and kindness. Staff and governors work well as a team flourishing under her leadership and demonstrating outstanding care for the children. The new vicar has now joined the school community and is already making a difference to the life of the school. The children's personal development and behaviour is excellent. This is a school which has the capacity to be an outstanding church school.

Established strengths

- The enthusiastic headteacher, who together with the governing body, is developing the school's Christian foundation
- The enthusiastic specialist RE teacher who is delivering the curriculum throughout the whole school
- A tangible Christian ethos exemplified by a staff team which work hard to ensure that the children's personal development is of the highest quality

Focus for development

- To include a programme of visits and visitors into the RE curriculum to enhance the teaching of other faiths
- To increase links with the church worldwide.
- To further develop spiritual awareness by creating a special garden in the school grounds.

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

Christian values permeate the life of the school and have a demonstrable impact on the children's personal development. Children are happy and secure in school and show care and concern for one another. In the playground, children of all ages play well together and

the older children in particular, play games with the younger ones and care for them. Children make good progress with learning because teachers work hard to meet all their needs. As one child said "teachers make me feel confident that I can learn new things." They are given an increasing measure of responsibility, appropriate to their age which enables them to demonstrate good levels of maturity and self esteem. For example, high expectations are placed on individual children to move independently around the unusually split site. The children's behaviour is excellent. Relationships are good at all levels. The children are proud of the warm inclusive atmosphere which means that those who join the school are immediately made welcome and make friends. The strong Christian ethos supports the spiritual development of all learners. Prayers are said before lunch and there is time for reflection included in lessons too as in the RE lesson observed. The spiritual development of the children also has a wider impact by reaching out to the parent community. Parents commented how much their children talked at home about their learning from RE lessons and collective worship and how this dialogue engaged the interest of the whole family. Parents also valued the open door welcoming policy and the way the school is supportive of their needs too. Their views are requested on a range of school issues and they felt too that the consultation process was an effective one. Again, the children felt valued by the way the school council contributed so much to the development of the school. Currently they are developing a garden which, in due course will have a particular spiritual focus.

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

Collective worship is coordinated and led enthusiastically by the headteacher. She is totally committed to her role in developing this area. It is an important part of the daily life of the school. Each day begins with collective worship as a whole school or a key stage group. All staff attend and lead in turn. The modern hall is used well for whole school acts of worship. The focus table with cross and candle, reflective music, beautiful banners and other colourful, displays promote a feeling of quiet reverence. The act of worship, which took place during the inspection led by the new vicar was inspirational, and of high quality. It was on the theme of the resurrection. All children participated by making accompanying sound effects and actions as he told the story of the first Easter day. They were thoroughly engaged in listening, taking part and empathising with the characters and subsequent feelings of being afraid. They enjoyed collective worship and valued it as a real learning experience. One child said it was special because it was a whole school event and "you were learning something new together, something of help to you." Another said it helped him "personally understand the world around me." The hymn was sung by the whole school community most enthusiastically and wholeheartedly. The message, that God is always with us, was clearly understood by the children. The school's distinctive Anglican tradition was reflected, for example, in the use of responses in the prayers, affirmations and by the colours of the liturgical cloth on the focus table. Evaluation of collective worship is embedded in the school's practice. Foundation governors assist the headteacher in monitoring and evaluating the programme for worship and children are also involved on a daily basis. Their written and verbal comments ensure that learning intentions are met and that each act is a meaningful event. Christian festivals are celebrated in All Saints church and are always well attended by the parents.

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

The headteacher and governors work in very close partnership and ensure that the development of the school's Christian foundation is continually given a high priority. Parents commented how the school's Christian character had been developed noticeably since the appointment of the new headteacher. An example given was the new focus on giving to charitable causes, often chosen by the children. Over the last year a new Christian vision for the school has been developed in close consultation with staff, governors, parents and children. Governors are proud of the school and its ethos in action. One governor observed that in particular, what was most noticeable for him was the respect shown by the children. The school's Christian foundation is regularly discussed at each governors meeting and included in the school's strategic plans for development. Foundation governors are completely committed to their role in supporting and challenging the school's Christian aims and strengthening its ethos. They are regular visitors, monitor acts of worship and RE and are completely part of the school community. The new vicar has been warmly welcomed and has made an impact in the months since his arrival. RE is well led by the headteacher. A

teacher has recently been appointed who teaches the subject to each of the classes and she is working closely with the headteacher monitoring the delivery of the curriculum and assessing the learning. RE is well resourced, including the use of ICT and music. Teaching and learning is good as the lesson observed where children were reflecting on the value Christians place on the natural world. Good use is made of All Saints church. It is regularly visited as part of the RE curriculum as well as for Christian festivals. Links with the church are being successfully developed further as part of the school's strategic plan. Locally, in the village and parish the partnership is currently strong. Members of the congregation and the village volunteer to help in the school. Groups of children sing each year for the local "lunch club" and for the local pre-school. The school site is used well for village and "shared" events and residents are always welcomed as part of the school community. This school is truly at the heart of the village.

SIAS report March 2008 Lydiard Millicent Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Lydiard Millicent, Swindon,SN5 3UR