

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Marhamchurch Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Helebridge Road
Marhamchurch
Bude
EX23 0HY

Diocese: Truro

Local authority: Cornwall

Dates of inspection: 21st February 2008

Date of last inspection: 8th and 10th May 2001

School's unique reference number: 111991

Head teacher: Jacky Bellis

Inspector's name and number: David Nebesnuick 556

School context

The school is on an attractive village site, opposite the parish church. It is in modern accommodation, built in 1994. The corridors and classrooms are very well used to display learners' work. The entrance hall contains the school Mission Statement and a folder containing many positive and supportive opinions of the school. A warm and welcoming atmosphere greets all visitors to the school. It is a popular and growing school with 119 learners, many from outside the immediate area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Marhamchurch Church of England VC Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Marhamchurch Church of England VC Primary School is a good school, secure in its Christian foundation. It provides a caring and secure learning environment in which all learners are individually valued and encouraged to achieve their full potential. The school enjoys the confidence of the wider community.

Established strengths

- Learners feel especially valued. The celebration of individual achievements develops the learners' confidence and involvement in the school.
- The Head teacher provides a strong steer to the development of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Her effective leadership is widely recognised and supported.
- The impact of the display of work on learners' enjoyment and progress is outstanding.

Focus for development

- Develop the assessment processes within the religious education curriculum to strengthen the subject's contribution to the overall ethos of the school.
- Systematically review and evaluate the impact of the collective worship programme on the spiritual life of the school.

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

Learners are articulate and speak of their enjoyment and pride in the school. Learners feel valued because of the emphasis on individual progress and success. They confirm that the star pupils' board and similar developments effectively celebrate each individual's worth. They speak enthusiastically about the wall displays and the opportunities to share their ideas and thoughts. Learners like the recent changes that stress and celebrate achievement. Parents talk about the family atmosphere and the heightened interest their children are taking in school events. Respect for others and strong relationships are notable strengths of the

school. There is a calm and safe environment in which learners flourish and make good progress. The display work is very effective in stimulating learners' interest and in developing their spiritual development. Of particular note are the class 2 materials illustrating the stories of creation and the Year 6 Anne Frank project. The school hall contains an outstanding prayer net, used very effectively in collective worship. Learners understand the significance of the Christian foundation of the school and are able to talk and reflect on key Christian festivals and events and their significance such as The Last Supper and Easter. Learners are particularly proud of their school prayer and its contribution to their collective worship. The introduction, this year, of a crib made from wood from The Holy Land was very popular both with learners and their parents. It provided a real focus for spiritual growth and reflection. One governor observed that, "as soon as you walk through the door, there is a feeling of excitement." A similar comment was made by a parent who said that; "the school provides a fantastic environment that provides a really good life foundation for the children".

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

Considerable care is given to planning, resourcing and delivering collective worship. Learners particularly enjoy the singing and they know well the words of the hymns. Collective worship is seen as central in the life of the school. For example, four days a week the day begins with an act of worship and on Friday it is at the end of the day to enable parents to celebrate with their children. Senior pupils lead the service well and the other pupils respond with good behaviour, interest and enthusiasm. During the service, observed during the inspection, a candle was lit; the Parish priest clearly and appropriately explained Christian symbolism; the school prayer was used and individual prayers from the prayer net read out. All of these elements indicate that collective worship in the school plays a significant part in learners' personal development and is a prime source of Christian nurture. The links with the Church are good and learners attend services several times a year. The presence of parents has shown a marked increase since September. This is an indication of the growing trust between the parents, school and the Church. The presence of the Hand bell Ringers at the Christmas service underlines the strengthening links with the parish and the wider community. Different groups are regularly asked for their opinions on collective worship. The school development plan recognises that this is part of an initiative that is still developing. The governing body can strengthen the impact of collective worship in the school by increasing their monitoring role and by further support to the staff.

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

The Head teacher has a clear understanding of what it means to be a Church school. She has involved all the staff, governors and parents in recent months to develop key aspects of the Christian life of the school, especially collective worship. Religious education has been carefully reviewed, a new coordinator appointed and additional resources created. The last stage is to strengthen the assessment processes. Once these have been fully implemented the leadership of the school will be well on the way to becoming outstanding. Whole school policies, planning and communications have been thoroughly reviewed and as a result parents speak very warmly of the warm and welcoming environment in the school. They talk of the excitement and enjoyment of their children in collective worship and the high level of care for the whole child that is given by the school. "Children are really proud to be part of the school." Parents believe they are listened to and that their opinions are valued. The governing body support the school and the Head teacher with commitment and enthusiasm. There is explicit evidence of good Church/school links in the parish newsletter and the range of services held in the Church. As a result of the strength of the school's ethos and the good leadership and management, community confidence is strong.