

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Mary Dean's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mary Dean Avenue
Tamerton Foliot
Plymouth
Devon
PL5 4LS

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Plymouth LEA

Dates of inspection: 20 November 2006

Date of last inspection: June 2001

School's unique reference number: 113418

Headteacher: Mr Nigel Sparrow

Inspector's name and number: Miss Susan Barton 162

School context

Mary Dean's Church of England School is situated on the outskirts of the city of Plymouth and draws its 330 pupils, aged 3 -11 years, from the village of Tamerton Foliot and surrounding area. The nursery with 19 children on role was opened in April 2005. It is a popular village school which is closely linked to the parish church of St Mary's.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mary Dean's Primary School as a Church of England school is good.

A distinctively Christian atmosphere rooted in love and respect permeates throughout the school. Pupils care and education are a priority which is achieved by effectively placing Christian values in all aspects of school life. Mary Dean's provides a positive and effective Christian foundation on which to build throughout life.

Established strengths

- The inclusiveness of the school ensuring accessibility to the whole curriculum and worship for all pupils.
- The very good behaviour displayed by pupils to adults and each other.
- Pupils' good attitudes ensure good learning takes place.

Focus for development

- Develop pupil's understanding of the Anglican faith and practice within worship.
- Enhance the school environment to make the Christian character more prominent, including a review of the school logo.
- Ensure that the distinctive Christian vision for the school is more explicit; checked and reviewed annually with all involved in the school, and involve the Diocese in in-service training.
- With the support of the foundation governors, formed into a sub-committee, check and review all areas related to the Christian foundation regularly to lead the school forward.

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

Christian values of love and respect for each other are evident in every part of the school ensuring pupils are happy, secure and valued. This provides the foundation for the good relationships which are found throughout the school where the adults lead by example. Pupils

take responsibility and listen to each other particularly through the school council who represent their views which are valued. Pupils are justly proud of their achievements, both as individuals and in groups, which are recognised and celebrated each week within the key stage departments. There are some areas of the school environment which promote a distinctive Christian character well, for example, the new glass panels in the front door, large wooden cross in the hall and large mosaics of Biblical scenes. However, the Christian character is insufficiently explicit throughout the school to enhance pupil's spiritual development. Religious education, worship and the Christian ethos of the school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils well. Grace is said before lunch and a parting prayer at the end of the day which helps pupils to identify with talking to God regularly. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and are aware of related Biblical teaching. Pupils are involved in the community, displaying care through fund raising and the choir visiting the elderly. The new link with a school in Ghana adds to the pupils understanding of other cultures. The good links with the local church and the Methodist Church, as well as involvement in worship by the student Christian group 'JUMP', from the College of St Mark and St John, and the Open Air Campaigners all of which enhance pupils' experience and adds to the good Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is considered important to the life of the school; however, this is not clearly revealed. An appropriate atmosphere of peace is created within a busy day. There is a wall mounted wooden cross prominently displayed, however, this does not make it a sufficiently special environment in which to worship. The predominantly Christian teaching is reflected in the pupil's very good behaviour around the school. Issues which pupils may be confronted with in life are raised and explored which has been appreciated. Pupils' attitudes are positive and they display respect for others. The importance of prayer is understood and prayers are written by pupils on occasions which are relevant to their lives. Older pupils know the Lord's Prayer and are beginning to understand the meaning behind it. Where pupils are more greatly involved through dance, drama and speaking, such as in class-led worship, pupils' enjoyment and concentration is enhanced. Good use is made of visiting groups and clergy who augment Biblical teaching. Parents are invited to class-led worship and special services held at Christmas and Easter which is appreciated.

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

The leadership and management by the headteacher and senior management team is valued. They listen to others and respond appropriately which helps to lead the school forward. However, the distinctive Christian vision for the school is insufficiently explicit to ensure all are working for the same end. It is the lack of explicit Christian distinctiveness which has led to the judgement of satisfactory. The strength of the staff team enables pupils and parents to recognise collaborative work where tolerance and respect for others is shown. Care and support for all pupils and staff both professionally and pastorally is appreciated and enhances relationships. Newly appointed staff are insufficiently aware of what it means to work in a church school. In the absence of the coordinator for worship and RE insufficient emphasis has been placed on the impact and effect of religious education and worship on the school community. The foundation governors provide good support to the school through the governor's committee structure. Good links with the parish church are established with regular visits by the Vicar as well as pupils visits to church. Parents are informed of special church services through school. Links with the Diocese are growing through support and in-service training.