

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Mary Howard Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane
Edingdale
Staffordshire
B79 9JJ

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire
Dates of inspection: 22nd April 2008
Date of last inspection: January 2004
School's unique reference number: 124249
Headteacher: Mrs. J Bullous
Inspector's name: Mr A Gilroy
Inspector number: 007

School context

Mary Howard Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is part of a federation of two Church of England primary schools which are led by one headteacher. This arrangement was established at the start of the 2007-8 school year and the school roll has grown significantly in that time. Both the classroom teachers are new to their positions, and the vicar, who works closely with the school took up her position in January 2008. There is strong support from both the governing body and the parents.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mary Howard Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

There is a distinctive Christian ethos, which permeates the life of the school. Staff, learners, parents and governors are all valued as partners in learning. This has been nurtured by the headteacher who has developed the school into one that is characterised by a sense of community spirit and openness.

Established strengths

- An ethos of care and respect embedded in Christian values.
- The strong Christian leadership of the headteacher.
- The support for the school by the vicar and the governing body.
- Courteous children who want to learn.

Focus for development

- Add appropriate Biblical texts to the weekly themes to enhance the continuity of Christian teaching in the collective worship planning.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship on the pupils.

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

The school documentation indicates an underlying Christian ethos lies behind all its work. This is clearly impacting on the learners who exhibit good manners and behave well around the school. In the lessons visited, learners worked collaboratively and cooperatively. This was also evident on the playground where learners of all ages played well together. Christian principles and values are practised in the care and consideration children show to others. When they have disagreements, the learners say that the staff are good at sorting out the issues, and that they are fair in dealing with them. Through circle time, the school council and collective worship, learners feel valued. They know that their opinions and their ideas are taken seriously by the adults and given proper consideration. The school works very effectively at addressing their needs. There is an interesting range of activities and equipment available each playtime that are used responsibly by the learners. Some of these

have been provided at the request of the school council. The council is an important contributor to the success of the school. Parents and carers find the school welcoming and secure. They strongly support the ethos of the school, the inclusiveness of the staff and the general atmosphere throughout. The school uses its Christian character to nourish and encourage the social, moral and cultural development of the learners. There is a system of rewards plus a regular opportunity to celebrate achievement during assembly, which strongly demonstrates the value of and commitment to pupil achievement in all aspects of school life. The school regularly provides opportunity for prayer and reflection in worship and at the end of the day. They also say grace before lunch. The spiritual needs of the learners are met in collective worship, religious education as well as in the wider rich curriculum available within and beyond the school day. Learners are very willing to share what they have learned in religious education lessons, collective worship and in other areas of the curriculum. The range of material covered has contributed to their good level of spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. There is a growing record of fundraising for a range of charities and good causes. The learners enjoy doing the fundraising and see it as important to help others who are less fortunate than themselves. The atmosphere around school is relaxed and orderly. Pupils say that it is a quiet, friendly school where they can get on with their work without interruption. Relationships between learners and adults working in the school are excellent.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship clearly contributes very well to the inclusive and accepting ethos of the school and emphasises the Christian understanding that everyone is valued in the sight of God and deserves respect. Pupil progress and achievement are celebrated and each participant is helped to feel part of a loving, Christian community. During the collective worship observed, the children displayed very good behaviour and demonstrated that they were engaged in the content by responding in an appropriate, lively and interested way throughout. They also say they like singing, hearing religious texts and acting out stories through drama. The children know the Lord's Prayer and can explain its meaning in their own language, indicating that they have a good understanding. Through worship, the learners are gaining a sound knowledge of how faith is practised and its importance to them in their everyday lives. Some say that they pray at home about matters that concern them. There are strong links with the local parish. These include the vicar who comes into school weekly and very effectively leads collective worship. The children greatly enjoy her contribution and see her as a natural part of their lives. Whilst the planning of collective worship identifies themes to be covered through the year, the next step is to identify specific biblical texts to use, which will reinforce the message being taught. This would enable the effective monitoring of the impact of the worship themes to take place.

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

The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear Christian focus wholeheartedly supported by the staff, the governors and the clergy. She energetically conveys her vision for the school and has created a sense of ownership and team spirit. The aims of the school are explicitly Christian. Leading by example, the head effectively ensures that the staff and learners work in a strong and caring community where learning can take place and children achieve within the context of a loving Christian environment. The school is in the first full year of federation and has made great strides in that time. In addition the new vicar has brought a great commitment to the community and to the school, which is greatly assisting in the development of this church school. Parents play an active part in their children's education and in the life of the school generally. They are regularly consulted and their views are taken into account when decisions are made. The parents speak highly of the very effective pastoral support given to all the pupils. There is good connection with the parish, a good example of which is the sharing of information in each other's newsletters. . To address the lack of opportunity for the learners to experience other cultural or faith communities locally, the school is involved in a project working with the East Staffordshire Race Relations Council to examine worldwide cultures, faiths and traditions. This will be followed up by further work, including visits to a cultural centre in Derby and a variety of religious buildings from a range of faiths in the Autumn term. This is a very appropriate and imaginative way to meet the needs of the learners within this school.