

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Mawnan Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,

Shute Hill,
Mawnan Smith,
Falmouth,
Cornwall,
TR11 5HQ.

Diocese: Truro

Local authority: Cornwall

Date of inspection: 30th April 2008

Date of last inspection: 14th – 15th January 2004

School's unique reference number: 112002

Headteacher: Mr. Randall Brook

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Jenny Pestrige (153)

School context

The school is situated in a small village, which is near to Falmouth and Penryn. There are 100 learners, who travel from the local and wider area. The majority of learners are White British. The school benefits from an extensive outdoor area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Mawnan Church of England VA Primary School, as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The Headteacher, staff and governors emphasise that the Church of England foundation in this school means, "gathering together to learn about and praise God through Jesus Christ." The school is serving the whole community, with an inclusive, calm and caring ethos. The commitment by the school and Clergy to the Church/school partnership is outstanding.

Established strengths

- The commitment and dedication of the Headteacher in maintaining and developing the Christian leadership of the school.
- The contribution of collective worship and religious education to the spiritual development of learners.
- The quality of relationships in the school, as a result of the support given to the school by teachers, learning support assistants, governors and parents.

Focus for development

- Develop a long-term rolling programme for collective worship.
- Develop the formal evaluation of collective worship and involve learners, teachers, governors and parents in this process.
- Create a policy for spiritual and moral development, in order to reflect and evaluate current practice.

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

Learners are exceptionally confident, articulate and happy at the school. Their confidence is encouraged by the opportunities given to them by their teachers, for example, through participation in the school council, and within lessons and clubs. Learners particularly enjoy out of school hours activities, such as the 'Breakfast Club' and 'Footprints'. These facilities

are run by the parents, and are supported by the Headteacher and teachers. They are an excellent example of the way parents and volunteers support this village school. Learners refer to the kindness of their teachers, and relationships in the school, at every level, are outstanding. As a result, the school has a family atmosphere with a team identity. One parent described the learners as having "a quiet confidence," which is unselfconscious and modest. These characteristics are typical of this school. Learners and their teachers share in the learning journey, and learners are respected and valued. Learners show a caring concern for each other and work together very well in mixed age groups. As a result of the school's self-evaluation, the school has recently identified specific Christian values, which are taught in and across the curriculum. This initiative is not yet reflected in a policy for spiritual and moral development, although opportunities for spiritual development were evident in all the lessons observed. These included examples of outstanding practice. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson, learners enjoyed the theme of watching things grow. The teacher created a quiet, calm atmosphere, as the lesson followed a time of peer group massage. Newly hatching chicks in the classroom provided an experience of wonder. Key questions helped the learners to think about what they could do now, in comparison with babyhood. The outdoor environment provides excellent opportunities for learners to develop their imagination and appreciate God's creation. The fact that the successful gardening club is extending the growing of vegetables to include an allotment, is an example of the enthusiasm of learners and staff. The links with the Church, through involvement in the collective worship programme and the 'Footprints' after-school club, means that learners are developing a positive relationship with the local Christian community.

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

Learners enjoy collective worship because the content is relevant to their lives. They especially enjoy the music and the school band. The school currently has a one-year programme for worship, which is based on the Church's year and significant festivals. There is not yet a long term rolling programme, to ensure progression. Although there is some informal evaluation of collective worship, learners are not involved in a formal process. In the act of worship observed, the story of the tax collector and the Pharisee was used to emphasise the virtue of humility. The act of worship included a song and two stories, all of which were written by 3 learners. These responses by learners were examples of best practice. Candles or a focus table are not used on a daily basis, but are a feature of collective worship for particular festivals, such as Advent. Learners are able to explain the use of candles at this time of the Church's year. The music band and individual learners, who participated in collective worship, provided an excellent focus. Particular aspects of worship in the school indicate the effectiveness of the links with the church. These are the termly Eucharist, and the involvement of the Curate in leading worship once a week. A distinctive feature of worship in school is the participation of the music band in every monthly Family Service held in the Church. This initiative was suggested by the Curate and is enthusiastically led by the Headteacher. This participation is an outstanding expression of the Christian ethos of the school. It also extends the experience and understanding of the learners who attend this service.

The effectiveness of the religious education is at outstanding.

The standard of learners' written work in religious education is outstanding. Learners are given the opportunity to empathise with Biblical characters, through a range of creative strategies. They experience mock 'court cases', so that whilst researching material, they become familiar with learning from religion (Attainment Target 1). The range of activities provided by teachers for learners is resulting in a high level of enjoyment. The learners' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is above average. In a whole school religious education session, learners in both Key Stages enjoyed working in mixed age groups. Teachers worked as a team, providing a positive role model. Learners worked on large drawings depicting key events and teachings in the life of Jesus. Learners from across the

age range were able to recognise and distinguish the particular Bible stories. They then worked together to create a gallery of paintings, collages and drawings, whilst continuing to discuss the stories. Teachers emphasised the significance of the choice of colour and materials. They explained the links with the feelings of the characters. Key questions are being used to enable learners to deepen their understanding. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, learners were asked to consider what the Pharisee and the tax collector were doing before they came to pray their contrasting prayers. The school is using innovative and imaginative computer-aided assessment, based on targets. The initiative is currently being trialled and adapted. Early evaluation indicates that learners are enthusiastic about using this method of self-assessment. This is an excellent development, and it reflects the significance given to religious education. It also indicates the level of rigour and enthusiasm shown by the coordinator, and the fact that it is seen as a core subject.

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

The outstanding leadership of the Headteacher is resulting in a vibrant community, where a family, team identity means that all learners feel happy and safe. An effective and challenging governing body supports the school, and foundation governors are proud of the way in which the school is integrated into the life of the village. The aims of the school are reviewed annually, and governors are keenly aware of the implementation of the Church of England foundation of the school. This is expressed within the curriculum, and in cross-curricular initiatives in the local and global community. The Chair of Governors states that the learners are “a credit” to the dedication of the Headteacher and staff. Governors are involved in the life of the school through paired monitoring, and their approach is professional and rigorous. The Curate and members of the Church community are fully committed to the Church/school partnership. This is resulting in exciting initiatives, which are making an outstanding impact on the lives of learners.

SIAS report - April 2008 - Mawnan Church of England VA Primary School, Shute Hill, Mawnan Smith, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR11 5HQ.