

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Milldown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

The Milldown
Blandford Forum
Dorset
DT1175H

Diocese Salisbury

LA: Dorset
SIAS Inspection: 7th December 2006
Previous S13 Inspection: March 2003
School URN: 113755
Headteacher: Mrs. S. Ryall
SIAS Inspector & No. Mrs. Fiona Brown NS301

School Context

Milldown Church of England changed status from a First to a Primary School in September 2003 and is awaiting a move to new premises in 2008. It has the full range of primary pupils but is slightly smaller than the average primary school. There are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and seven are at an early stage of English language acquisition and have either Nepalese or Filipino as a first language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free meals and with special needs is above average.

Summary Judgement

The schools' distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England Primary School are satisfactory with some good features.

The school as recently reviewed its mission statement and is actively striving to increase the challenge and support for all its pupils.

Established strengths

- Value placed on each individual pupil in the school community
- The high standard of pastoral care for all its pupils
- Relationships with parents and wider community
- Regular links with the parish church

Focus for development

- Continue to develop the spiritual aspect of school life by providing training for staff and Governors on the distinctiveness of a church school
- Continue to support and challenge pupils in all areas
- Continue to raise the status of R.E. by further developing the planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Continue to raise standard of Collective Worship by reviewing the planning of themes and actively engaging all pupils consistently

The school makes satisfactory provision to meet the needs of all pupils

Their personal development is good because of the school's inclusive Christian ethos and by providing a safe and caring environment. Pupils are listened to and this was very evident in a meeting of the effective school council. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and have even discouraged the staff from having biscuits except on Fridays! Pupils contribute well to the school and the wider community. This year they have decided that each class will give a present to a Children's Hospice. Parents and church have supported this and the gifts will be presented in a church service. Peer mediators of all ages help pupils to be happy in the playground and take this job seriously as they do with all other responsibilities. Pupils know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour. The nurture group is a special area in the school where pupils are supported so well and this has a huge impact on the whole school. A variety of clubs including breakfast and after school enhances the provision for all learners. The Golden Time Café for parents on a Friday afternoon is a wonderful initiative.

The impact of collective worship is satisfactory.

A recent audit has been carried out with all pupils and the results are being discussed to see how worship can be more valuable and accessible to all pupils. They need to be clear about the difference between worship and assembly. One child said that worship was important because 'you could let all your feelings out.' The local clergy and foundation governors are enthusiastic and very supportive. There are some vacancies for foundation governors on the governing body. Pupils speak well of worship and there is discussion about how to actively involve the pupils more and possibly trying to give the pupils more responsibility in planning and leading worship. The school have started to evaluate worship. The impact of worship could be improved if themes for worship are discussed more fully by school and clergy. This would make worship more meaningful for the pupils and develop a coherent approach.

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

This is satisfactory with some good features. The Headteacher has worked hard in taking the school forward and provided good leadership during a difficult time of transition from first to primary. There is a clear statement of Christian ethos, which has been drawn up by foundation governors. The promotion of Christian values has been effective and is reflected in the inclusion provision and pastoral care for all pupils. Staff and Governors need to revisit the nature of distinctiveness to enable all stakeholders to move the school forward as a church school. The Headteacher at present coordinates RE and Collective Worship and has started to monitor RE lessons. She is going to be supported by an enthusiastic foundation governor. The clergy actively support the teaching of RE. Evidence of this was seen in a year one class, focussed on signs and symbols in Christianity, who were confidently engaged in sharing their knowledge and reflections with the curate. Parents are regularly consulted and are happy with the school. They are supportive and actively encouraged to be involved in the school.