

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Monteclefe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane,
Kirkham Street,
Somerton
TA117NL

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 6th March 2008

Date of last inspection: 8, 9 March 2004

School's unique reference number: 123838

Headteacher: Mr David Norton

Inspector's name and number: Mr David Shears – 423

School context

Monteclefe is a rural Junior school that currently has 180 pupils on roll. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies in each year group but the percentage of pupils from ethnic minorities is low. The current headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Monteclefe Church of England, Voluntary Aided Junior School as a Church school is good.

Established strengths

- The outstanding care of pupils ensure that they become mature, considerate people.
- The leadership of the headteacher supports the well-being of all in the school, including pupils and their families, as well as staff.
- The community, including Christian organisations, are used well to support the development of pupils.

Focus for development

- Develop clearer planning for collective worship to enhance the spiritual development of pupils.
- Provide training to help the governing body improve their effectiveness in monitoring and evaluating so they can support and challenge the school more fully.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in the way it meets the needs of all learners

Pupils love their school. They talk about it with great enthusiasm and enjoy all that it has to offer. They have many special opportunities to extend their learning in innovative ways such as learning to play the ukulele. They all feel safe and secure in an environment that seeks to nourish and care for them as individual people. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. There are a number of ways in which pupils are given the opportunity to reflect, although these need to be developed further, particularly in RE. The relationships between all members of the school community are excellent. There is an atmosphere of enjoyment created by staff, who relish teaching the pupils, and the pupils themselves enjoying the learning. The school environment is full of character and is used well to encourage pupil's spiritual development. Displays are bright and informative. They include effective quotes from the Bible that encourage reflection. There is a lovely system of caring through 'random acts of kindness'. Pupils secretly pick out a name of a child on a Monday and look for ways of being kind to them through the week. This helps pupils to put what they

have learnt regarding caring for each other into action in their daily lives.

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

The impact of collective worship on pupils is good. They enjoy participating and particularly like it when visiting people lead the worship. There is a good range of experiences for pupils. As well as the local vicar leading worship, they also receive visits from the local chapel and the county evangelist. Pupils come into the hall with care and respect. They sing well and there are opportunities for them to pray, including using the Lord's Prayer. They are given time to reflect on what has been presented. They participate well and enjoy listening to stories. All teaching staff attend and participate in worship which is seen to be an important part of every school day. The format of worship changes, giving a variety of experiences, including class worship, singing practice and celebration assemblies. There is a policy for worship that includes helpful suggestions for each month of the year such as feast days and appropriate readings from the Bible. However, there is no weekly planning for worship to bring this together under a theme so that pupils can make the most of developing their understanding. Worship is not formally evaluated to ensure that it is effective. The Parish Church is used well for special acts of worship such as at Christmas, Harvest and Easter. In particular the school carol service is well attended not just by parents, but also the whole community. This was cited by a number of parents as being 'the highlight of the year'.

The Religious Education is good.

Pupils have a good knowledge both of Christianity and other world religions. They view RE as an important part of the school curriculum. As a result their work is neatly presented and looked after well. Marking is good in some classes, where encouraging and helpful comments are included, although this is not consistent across the school. Although their books show much development in terms of their understanding of what people believe and how they worship, there is less evidence of reflective writing. Nevertheless, there was evidence of opportunities for reflective thought through discussion in lessons although this could be extended further. Pupils enjoy finding out more about people's beliefs and use ICT to research further information. They particularly enjoy watching excerpts from DVDs that support their understanding. Planning for RE is in place. An ICT system records assessments although these are not detailed enough to be able to support planning. The knowledgeable RE co-ordinator provides advice to staff although lessons are not currently monitored. Nevertheless, standards in RE are at least in line with their attainment in the core subjects, with some pupils demonstrating good achievement.

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

The school has a set of effective aims that support the Christian foundation of the school. However, although these appear in the prospectus and there is other evidence to suggest the school's Christian affiliation, the stakeholders seem not to be aware of them. The good management of the headteacher ensures that Christian values are well presented and well established in school life. However, the governors do not monitor or evaluate how successfully the vision is being realised in school either in terms of its Christian ethos, collective worship or RE. The diocese offers training in this. Some issues that have been raised in the previous inspection report have not been successfully addressed. The headteacher has begun to seek the views of pupils in evaluating collective worship although parents are not yet included. There are some links with the Parish Church and clergy although support for the school could be more effective. Some staff have received recent training opportunities although this needs to be extended to all. Despite a lack of monitoring and evaluation, however, the impact of Christian values is good. Nevertheless, a robust system to review and extend provision would bring clarity and improvement to a well loved school.