

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Moordown St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Vicarage Road,  
Bournemouth  
BH9 2SA

**Diocese: Winchester**

Local authority: Bournemouth

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2007

Date of last inspection: March 2002

School's unique reference number: 113838

Headteacher: Mr Peter Herbert

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

#### **School context**

Moordown St John's is a larger than average sized primary school. The majority of children come from favourable social and economic backgrounds. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is just above the national average. Most children come from a white British heritage with a few who speak English as an additional language. Pupil mobility is low.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Moordown St John's CE VA Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Moordown St John's is a very successful church school with a wonderful family feel, underpinned by a strong emphasis on its Christian ethos. It is a very caring community which places children first, giving them many opportunities to make significant progress in their learning and personal development.

#### **Established strengths**

- Relationships are based on mutual respect, care and trust between all members of the school community.
- A very clear emphasis is placed on developing the personal growth of each child.
- Links between all members of the school community are strong.

#### **Focus for development**

- Develop ways of making the language of liturgy more accessible to the children in all forms of worship.
- Build upon the good practice in class worship by creating a series of more in-depth questions to support and deepen the themes used in weekly worship.
- Develop the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating collective worship and religious education.

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

Moordown St John's is a joyful community where everyone is a valued part of the family. Despite its size and situation in the middle of a large conurbation, the school has successfully managed to create a feeling of intimacy and this is reflected in the high quality of relationships between all members. The foundation for this comes from a strong commitment to Christian principles and a set of values based on respect, care and trust, which pervade all areas of school life. Children in particular have a high mutual regard for each other, which the school actively encourages. For example, there are residential trips at the start of the school year which focus on developing the children's sense of confidence, self-worth and collaboration. On one such trip a child achieved a personal goal with the encouragement of the rest of the class. This is a reflection of the trust and care that exists between individuals. Children have very positive attitudes towards school. They regard it as a safe and secure place in which they have many opportunities to reach their potential. The high levels of attendance and participation in extra curricular activities are indicators that children enjoy

coming to school. They have positive views of what the future holds for them and understand that the school is giving them a good start in life not only in the high quality of learning but also in showing them how to live their lives through the teachings of Jesus. Standards throughout the school are high and children with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress. The School Council provides children with a voice through which they can raise their concerns. It is an important part of the school and has led to changes which have enhanced the quality of life at school. Of great benefit is the way in which the school equips children with an inner strength which will support them as they face challenges in their future lives.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good with outstanding features**

Worship is of a consistently good quality. Acts of worship are used as special times to acknowledge and reflect on the presence of God. Younger children say that it is a time to learn about the teaching of Jesus and how these can help them to lead better lives. The school has clearly thought about how children of different ages relate to God and develop their beliefs. Planning takes this into account, making acts of worship relevant to the maturity of the children. The difference between an act of worship and assembly is very clear. Children are prepared for worship by the introduction of a time of quiet or the lighting of a candle to help focus their thoughts on accepting God into their hearts. This is a reflection of the importance of worship in the life of the school. Older children are able to express the place that worship has in their lives by explaining that it encourages them to think about themselves and reflect on how others should be treated. When worship involves the children in an active way, attitudes are good. They particularly like class based worship where they have the opportunity to discuss their views in a more intimate environment. Worship is firmly rooted in Anglican traditions with familiar words of greeting and prayers that are accessible to the children. A children's prayer box is regularly monitored by the parent prayer group and these prayers then form part of collective worship. The major festivals of the Christian year are reinforced by celebrating them in the church. Pupils recognise that these are special times in Christianity and that it is a valuable part of being a church school. The school has close links with the church and is keen to see how the very good examples of class worship can be extended to all types of worship experiences for the children.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good with outstanding features**

Religious Education at Moordown St John's makes a significant contribution to the family feel of the school by promoting inclusion and mutual respect for all. Standards are good in key stage 1 and 2 and carefully differentiated work means that children of all abilities are challenged. The quality of teaching overall is good. Expectations are high and children make good progress in KS1 and KS2. Their knowledge of Christianity and other religions is very good and children are given many opportunities to respond to what they have learned as well as to reflect on their own views and beliefs. This was seen in one lesson where younger children were not only asked to express their response to the creation story by using a variety of media but had to consider their feelings that went with it. Children's attitudes towards RE are very good because they are fully engaged in the many creative ways in which their learning is presented to them. This creates an atmosphere in which children feel they can express an opinion knowing that their views will be listened to by others. Lessons have a very positive atmosphere because relationships between adults and children are good. Children work well together and willingly share ideas and listen carefully to the views of others. The high quality of RE work on display both in the classrooms and around the school is a reflection of the importance given to the subject. The Co-ordinator for RE has only recently been in post but has already made a significant impact on the quality of the pupils' attitudes and responses to the subject. She has very clear grasp of what needs to be done to take the subject forward particularly in how assessment can be used to raise standards even further.

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

The leadership and management of Moordown St John's has worked extremely closely

together with a shared mission and commitment, continually looking at ways to enhance the school's Christian ethos. It is because this ethos is supported wholeheartedly by the entire school community that the school has a great sense of unity and gives it its family feel. The headteacher encapsulates this in the way that he models Christian behaviour. Members of the school community talk of his great care towards both children and adults. He has a very clear vision of how he would like to develop further the school's unique character. This is something that the governing body fully support because they understand how important the school's religious character is in the development of each child's learning and personal development. The Chair of Governors in particular speaks with great commitment about this. Governors are keen to extend their role by developing their part in the formal monitoring and evaluation of RE and collective worship. Links with the local church community are very strong, many of which are reciprocal. For example, the church community use the school regularly for Sunday School. This has created a bond in which both communities feel they share an 'ownership' of each other. The vicar is a familiar person in the school both in his role as a governor but increasingly in his pastoral role, visiting each class once a term. Parents are very supportive of the school and say that it isn't something that is separate from the children's Christian lives. Parents speak of the 'inner strength' that the school develops in their children which will offer a source of support when the children face challenging times in their future lives.

Moordown St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Vicarage Road,  
Bournemouth BH9 2SA July 2007