

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Newtown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Newtown

Wem

Shropshire

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Shropshire

Dates of inspection: 19 March 2007

Date of last inspection: July 2002

School's unique reference number: 123490

Headteacher: Mrs C Brown

Inspector's name and number: Mr T M Powell 200

School context

This is a small rural school of 127 pupils, the vast majority of whom are from a white ethnic background. There is a wide social mix amongst pupils. A considerable number travel to school from neighbouring villages or towns. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Newtown as a Church of England school are good

It has some very good features. Pupils feel secure and happy here and are nurtured as part of a caring Christian community.

Established strengths

- The school's strong Christian ethos that influences all aspects of its life.
- The excellent behaviour and attitudes of pupils.
- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils.
- Very good links between the school and the church and the strong support for the school by the Church team.

Focus for development

- Review the Mission statement to ensure that it acknowledges and celebrates the school's distinctive Christian ethos and its church foundation.
- Find ways to evaluate collective worship, judged in terms of the quality of provision and the response of pupils.
- Give an occasional formal feedback to the governing body on the content and quality of worship at the school.
- Continue to implement the plan to further develop links between the staff and the church team in planning acts of worship.

The impact of the distinctive Christian character of the school in meeting the needs of learners is good.

The school has a distinctively Christian ethos that values each child as an individual. The development of pupils' self-confidence and belief in their own abilities is a particular focus of the school's philosophy that has a noticeably positive impact. In a discussion several pupils talked of their appreciation of the way the school encourages them to believe in themselves. All pupils are equally valued and their views are sought and acted upon by the school. The school council is effective in developing pupils' sense of responsibility and their feeling that they have an important and valued part to play in school development. Pupils talk of their pride in their school. They are well aware that it is a church school and feel that this fact contributes strongly to the way they are cared for and valued. They respond well to the good provision that is made for their spiritual development.

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

Worship occupies an important place in the life of the school. Planning is subject to a regular rolling programme of review. The link between the school's own planning for worship and that of the parish clergy is close and is currently being developed further. This helps to ensure an overall balance of themes that includes appropriate elements of Anglican worship and celebrates the church's major festivals. Pupils respond very well to the school's provision. They show in discussion that they have a clear understanding of the purpose of worship. They particularly value the opportunities they are given to write their own prayers, which are then incorporated into acts of worship. One pupil expressed the view that worship made him feel refreshed and another talked of valuing the chance to express personal thoughts and feelings. Pupils responded positively to the act of worship seen, which was very well led by a member of the church team. Pupils entered and left the hall very quietly and were given a short time for reflection and a focus for their thoughts. It is suggested that the school finds effective ways of evaluating the quality of worship and of pupils' response and reports its findings to the governing body on an annual basis. Parents have said that they enjoy attending school services at church, which they feel are an important part of the curriculum and have a significant impact on children's learning.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors work well together to promote the school's Anglican foundation, which is made clear through various signs and symbols and in the school's letterheads and several of its policy documents. The partnership between the school and the parish is very strong and benefits the school considerably. Church members and clergy are involved in many school activities and events in addition to leading worship at school and in church. The church offers a weekly open door session for parents which families have found extremely supportive. The school maintains a strong partnership with the diocese by subscribing to its support system and having an annual review. Parents' views on certain aspects of the school are sought annually by means of questionnaires. The school might consider obtaining their views on its distinctive Christian ethos. The celebration of the school's Anglican foundation and ethos might be further strengthened by a review of the Mission Statement, involving all interested parties in producing a document that will clearly express the school's Christian purpose.